MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

TODAY

Volume 29, Number 1 Fall 2000

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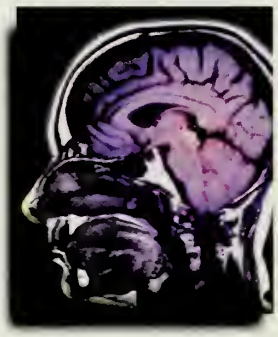

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MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA

TODAY

Dear Readers,

The fall edition of *Medical College of Georgia Today* serves as our annual report, filled with data and statistics. Of course, all this information is important; it quantifies our progress and accomplishments, and we are always proud to share it.

Yet the essence of our university defies quantification. What makes the Medical College of Georgia great is its people, and the heart and soul they bring to task of helping to fulfill our mission. That's why I'm so pleased that, in addition to data and statistics, this edition of *MCG Today* also introduces you to some of the extraordinary people who make this university second to none.

Dr. Sylvester McRae and Yakov Dudelzak seemingly have little in common; one is an African American from Helena, Ga., the other a young man from Latvia. But both found their way to MCG, despite overwhelming odds. They grew up on opposite sides of the world in poverty, yet clung to a dream of a better life. Their goal was never material gain; they simply wanted to serve their fellow human beings as physicians. Dr. McRae has been living his dream for 25 years; Yakov is just getting started. Yet their tremendous initiative is timeless, and they epitomize the highest ideals of our institution. I hope you enjoy reading their stories.

And as always, this edition of the magazine lists the many people who selflessly share their assets to help us reach our goals and continually strive for greater heights. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Your commitment is helping us ensure a bright, vibrant future for the Medical College of Georgia.

Sincerely,

Francis J. Tedesco

Francis J. Tedesco, M.D.
President, Medical College of Georgia

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MCG President: *Francis J. Tedesco, M.D.*
Interim Vice President for University Advancement: *Bruce Howerton*
Editor: *Christine Hurley Deriso*
Art Director: *Brent D. Burch*
Photographer: *Phil Jones*

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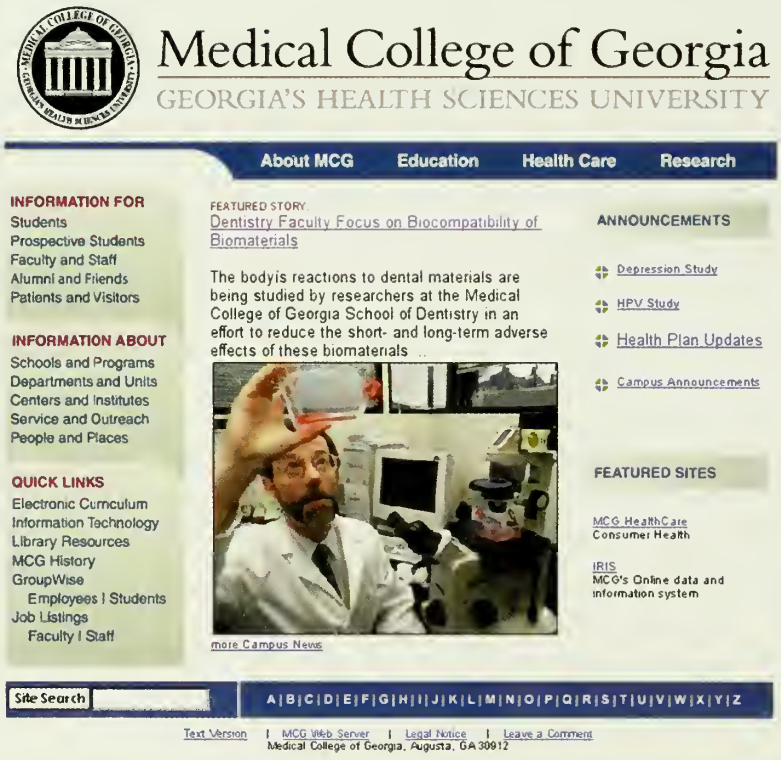
AT A GLANCE

Web Facelift

The Medical College of Georgia has redesigned its home page and Web site to reflect the dynamic nature of the university.

The new home page (www.mcg.edu) features regularly updated news about the university. An illustrated campus feature story dominates the home page, which also includes quick, user-friendly links to other MCG-related sites.

"I'm delighted with it," said Dr. Barry D. Goldstein, senior vice president for academic affairs. "The new page is more reflective of MCG, what we're trying to achieve and the information we're trying to present to the public. And it is esthetically very well-presented."



Becky Rogers, manager of MCG's Web Technology Group, chaired a committee to assess the former home page and recommend changes. The committee studied other Web sites and submitted a campuswide survey soliciting feedback about how to optimize MCG's presence on the Internet. Most of those ideas were implemented, Ms. Rogers said.

"We did most of what the respondents asked for because they were all asking for the same kinds of things," she said, noting that the most common request was to make all MCG sites accessible from the home page. The MCG community also requested an attractive, topical home page that would encourage frequent visits.

Once survey results were compiled, Ms. Rogers assembled several members of the MCG community—including both the computer-savvy and the computer-phobic—to further refine the home page and test its user-friendliness. The MCG Home Page Design Committee then created the final result.

The home page is designed to appeal to both the MCG community and to those unfamiliar with the campus, Ms. Rogers said. Now, visitors to the home page can quickly and easily learn about student application, financial aid, job openings, research projects, clinical services and many other topics of interest to MCG students, employees, alumni, patients and friends.

Presidential Search

Two committees have been named to help the University System of Georgia Board of Regents select a successor to retiring Medical College of Georgia President Francis J. Tedesco.

The committees were named in the summer, and the search is expected to last approximately six months. A search firm is assisting in the process.

Chairing the campus-based Presidential Search and Advisory Committee is Dr. Brad J. Potter, associate professor in the School of Dentistry and School of Graduate Studies. Other faculty members on the committee are Dr. John D. Catravas, Regents professor of pharmacology and toxicology and director of MCG's Vascular Biology Center; Dr. Ralph J. Caruana, professor in the School of Medicine; Dr. Martha J. Bradshaw, associate professor in the School of Nursing; Lori H. Prince, instructor in the Department of Health Information Management; and Michael K. Shrout, professor in the School of Dentistry and School of Graduate Studies.

Non-faculty committee members are Terri E. Pryor, administrative specialist IV in the Human Resources Division; Christopher R. Kuzniak, president of the Student Government Association; Dr. William E. Mayher III, chairman of the board of the MCG Foundation; and Dr. David M. Cohen, president of the Alumni Association of the MCG School of Medicine.

State-at-large members are Dr. Murray Freedman, an Augusta gynecologist and MCG alumnus; Julian Osbon, president of Augusta Tomorrow; and Dr. Louis Sullivan, president of Morehouse School of Medicine and former secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The University System of Georgia-based committee, the Special Regents Committee, will interview the five, unranked finalists presented by the Presidential Search and Advisory Committee. The full board will make the final selection.

Center of Excellence

The Medical College of Georgia Movement Disorders Clinic has been designated a Center of Excellence by the National Parkinson Foundation Inc., the largest international organization supporting scientific and clinical initiatives for Parkinson's disease patients and their families.

MCG is the only facility in Georgia and South Carolina to obtain this designation for its clinical and basic science research as well as physical, speech and occupational therapy programs for patients with this neurodegenerative disease.

As one of 62 Centers of Excellence, MCG will receive annual funding from the Miami-based foundation to support research, clinical initiatives and an annual symposium.

MCG Health*Care* provides the latest medical and surgical treatment—including pallidotomy and deep brain stimulation—for Parkinson's disease. MCG also is involved in numerous clinical studies to find better treatments, including evaluation of several new drugs that slow disease progression. Also, MCG researchers are exploring the mechanisms of cell death associated with Parkinson's disease, including environmental toxins, and the use of stem cells to reverse the disease process.

Healthy Sexuality

Think fast: Name a medical condition that has no potential effect on sexual functioning. OK, here's an easier test: Name one that doesn't.

Countless conditions can affect sexuality, but health care providers may not make the connection. The MCG Human Sexuality Multispecialty Group consists of specialists in many areas of health care sharing information about human sexuality and helping ensure that threats to healthy sexuality don't go unnoticed.

Group members represent fields such as psychiatry, obstetrics/gynecology, urology, endocrinology, cardiology and internal medicine.

"We felt that in working together, we could further our goals much more rapidly than we could working in isolation," said Dr. Diane Solursh, a Medical College of Georgia psychologist who helped form the group. "We're trying to raise consciousness about causes of sexual problems, encourage health care professionals to ask questions, make sure they have the information they need to relay to their patients and improve the education of medical students in this area."

Dr. Solursh noted that patients are often reluctant to discuss sexual problems with physicians. And too often, physicians don't think to ask. In addition to treating obvious symptoms, physicians must be attuned to subtler implications—including sexual problems—of medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, depression and obesity, Dr. Solursh said.

The group recently surveyed U.S. and Canadian medical schools to determine how much instruction students receive about human sexuality. "We found huge variability," Dr. Solursh said. "Sexuality doesn't get addressed per se in licensing exams, so many schools don't teach it."

The group, which next will survey nursing schools, plans to develop educational materials to fill in the gaps. Dr. Solursh hopes the materials will not only provide information but will help broaden students' comfort zone with the subject.

DEADLY PRESSURE

Toni Baker

Underneath the youthful skin and easy smile of Osettius Davis lurks a potentially deadly pressure.

Each time his 26-year-old heart beats, it meets an unnatural resistance in the arteries designed to take the blood outward to the body. Without treatment, his heart would have to work too hard with literally every beat. Eventually that vital muscle would enlarge and become less efficient. But that's only part of the potential destruction. The pressure would wreak havoc wherever blood flows, damaging both the vessels that carry blood and all the organs that receive it.

The aberrant resistance is called high blood pressure, a condition that might seem unusual for such a young man. But hypertension has long been a part of Osettius' life. When he first came to the Medical College of Georgia's Georgia Prevention Institute, he came as a teenager at risk, both because of a strong family history of the disease and his African-American heritage.

At the GPI, Osettius joined a group of his peers participating in longitudinal studies to determine when risk factors such as family history, ethnicity, reactivity to stress and inactivity doom young people to become adults with cardiovascular disease.

For some, it's not a long wait.

By late adolescence, Osettius' pressures already were borderline for his age and gender, said Dr. Frank Treiber, the institute's director and principal investigator of the studies. Within a few short years, he was a diagnosed hypertensive.

If it seems odd to think of a 20-year-old hypertensive, consider that 1 to 2 percent of children are hypertensive, said Dr. Gregory A. Harshfield, a GPI physiological psychologist with expertise in the kidneys' role in blood pressure control. "That may seem like a small amount, but in a city such as Houston and its surrounding area, that is roughly 70,000 kids," Dr. Harshfield said.

Data suggest that percentages may be as high as 15 percent in some at-risk adolescent populations, said Dr. Coral Hanevold, chief of the MCG Section of Pediatric Nephrology. In fact, hypertension has become such a problem for children that the MCG Children's Medical Center is one of the first sites evaluating the safety and efficacy of high blood pressure

Osettius Davis (facing page), Dr. Frank Treiber (left) and Dr. William B. Strong (below)

medications, originally designed for adults, in children as young as 6.

The reality is the number of hypertensive children and adolescents may be underestimated. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends regular blood pressure checks for children 3 and older, but it isn't known how often the checks actually are done, said Dr. William B. Strong, chief of the MCG Section of Pediatric Cardiology and founder of the GPI.

In 1985, he and Dr. Treiber began following a population of about 250 toddlers, some with family histories of hypertension. They have documented changes in blood pressure and other risk factors of cardiovascular disease in some of the youngest study participants in the longitudinal studies funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Over the years of challenging these kids physically and emotionally to measure the impact of life's stressors on blood pressure and heart function, the researchers have seen cartoon character Darth Vader come and go and come again as a hero for these kids and have even seen some of the young people now reaching age 20 become parents.

They also have seen about 20 become hypertensive young adults.

"There is no question that some of these changes occur fairly early, but they can be fairly subtle and you have to be looking really in a research mode to be able to find them," Dr. Strong said. And, naturally, the earlier the elevated pressure begins, the earlier the resulting damage.

These were issues Dr. Strong considered long before he earned his medical degree. At 64, Dr. Strong is the oldest living male in his family; his father, Bernard, died in his 50s from coronary disease and had his first heart attack at age 36. "I was 10 at the time," he reflected. As time passed, Dr. Strong realized that his father's heart attack did not happen in isolation, but was the result of a disease years in the making.

He put those thoughts into words in his undergrad-

uate senior thesis on the role of the stickiness of platelets in causing clots in the heart. He put his thoughts into practice the day he became a doctor.

Dr. Strong doesn't believe genetics alone sent his father to an early grave; his smoking habit helped seal his fate. Dr. Strong's mother, Dorothy —also a smoker—was diagnosed with lung cancer at age 75. She died at age 82 from respiratory syncytial virus, insisting to the end that her favorite cigarettes be sold to the nurse, not simply discarded.

Dr. Strong's subspecialty, pediatric cardiology, focuses on genetic heart defects. But the questions he had as a child about just when risk factors, such as smoking, begin to make a difference also inspired him to look at children with healthy hearts to see where their heritage and lifestyle led them.

It was 1984 when Dr. Treiber, a child psychologist who had just joined the MCG faculty, heard Dr. Strong give one of his pioneering lectures about high blood pressure in youth. "He was talking about lifestyle behavior playing a much bigger role early in life than people had anticipated," Dr. Treiber recollected. Smoking and high cholesterol already were known risk factors, but the jury was still out on the role of physical activity. But mounting evidence suggested that psychological stress might exacerbate the risk of hypertension.

So began a partnership that, along with Dr. Maurice Levy, resulted in an institute to study risk factors for cardiovascular disease—such as inactivity, poor diet, a strong family history of the disease and environmental stress, exploring how and when these risk factors become the reality of disease and determining how best to intervene.

Dr. Strong's lecture topic–reactivity to stress—became a focal point. So while the traditional treadmill and stationary bicycle have a significant place at the GPI in assessing cardiovascular fitness, young study participants are put through their emotional paces as well.

One great predictor of stress reactivity has been a simple ice pack on the head. "It causes huge vasoconstriction accompanied by significant increases in blood pressure," Dr. Treiber said. Wired for heart rate and other indicators of cardiovascular function, participants also play challenging video games using virtual reality technology and discuss stressful events in their lives. The studies have found that the young participants whose

Turning Back the Clock

blood pressures react to these research-induced stressors react to life's stressors as well.

One major response to environmental stress is the fight-or-flight instinct. Accompanying physiological changes of this survival instinct to either battle danger or run from it include salt retention to produce what is intended as a short-term boost in blood pressure. "The purpose of blood pressure over the long term is to maintain sodium balance," Dr. Harshfield said. But for some people, sodium retention persists long after the immediate stress has passed, keeping pressures elevated. The question is why.

Dr. Harshfield's previous studies in California showed that some African-Americans take longer than whites to normalize the sodium balance and, that even during sleep, their blood pressures often remain elevated. GPI studies of identical twins show that about 60 percent of reactivity to stress is likely genetic.

"We are trying to identify the different mechanisms underlying that response pattern," said Dr. Harshfield. The researchers are looking in many directions because they believe that high blood pressure isn't as straightforward as hyper-reactivity to stress. "Hypertension is a symptom of a lot of underlying disorders," Dr. Harshfield said. "You can produce hypertension without stress. You can have it because the kidneys aren't operating naturally or because of hormones from the adrenal gland. But we think that psychological stress does contribute to the development and maintenance of hypertension."

"What we have found early on is that the child who has risk factors for hypertension is often more likely to show these exaggerated increases in blood pressure in response to acute stress," Dr. Treiber said. "Nobody has comprehensively looked at the mechanisms responsible for that."

Drs. Treiber, Harshfield and Strong agree that the kidneys play a major role in hypertension and are still exploring their full impact while also trying to determine just where reactivity to stress factors into the hypertensive equation.

"But what we are finding is that exaggerated reactivity to stress is a contributing factor, especially in those at risk," Dr. Treiber said. "After accounting for the standard, classic risk factors for hypertension, reactivity to stress is still adding more predictive value as to who is likely to show greater increases. Like grandma says, 'You had a stressful day; you need to relax.'"

Researchers are turning back the clock to the days when children routinely played outside for several hours after school to document whether this sort of regular, physical activity improves the cardiovascular health of 8- to 10-year-old black girls.

Variables associated with cardiovascular disease later in life—such as ratio of body fat to lean muscle and fat levels in the blood–will be measured before and after children spend a year's worth of afternoons playing soccer or tennis or dancing. Other key indicators that will be followed include the amount of fat stored around organs in the abdomen and insulin sensitivity.

"The fact that it makes good sense for people to exercise is not always enough," said Dr. Bernard Gutin, exercise physiologist at the Medical College of Georgia's Georgia Prevention Institute and principal investigator on the $3 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health. "We need objective data on the impact of regular physical activity to say definitively that exercise has a positive effect on the cardiovascular health of young children. If we prove that it is effective, then parents, school boards and administrators and legislators will see that there is an especially good reason to implement after-school programs."

The Georgia Prevention Institute has completed several studies on children and adolescents and found that regular, controlled exercise programs lasting 30 to 60 minutes benefit fitness and body composition. "If we can see improvements under controlled conditions as we have in previous studies, we have partly answered the question of what happens to children who exercise. But we are now taking it to the next step," Dr. Gutin said. "What if they exercise in a setting that is more realistic: their own schools with their own teachers?"

Previous studies transported participants to the gymnasium of the Georgia Prevention Institute. But for this study, teachers under the direction of Dr. Wayne Wiggins, former director of physical education for the Richmond County School System, will stay after school with the kids for 90 minutes of vigorous, albeit less-structured, exercise than with previous studies.

Dr. Gutin is looking for various fitness and fatness levels in participants to compare varying responses to exercise and will work with the children and parents to pick activities the children enjoy. All participants will get extensive pre- and post-study testing, but half will participate in the after-school program and the remainder will continue normal activity levels.

Participants will be prepubescent because puberty influences some factors being studied, such as body composition, and because of previous studies showing better compliance in younger children.

Black girls were selected because of their increased risks. Obesity is an increasing problem in general and blacks are among the minority groups at highest risk. Also, girls tend to become less active as they mature, Dr. Gutin said.

Dr. Paule Barbeau, exercise physiologist, and Dr. Catherine L. Davis, psychologist, at the Georgia Prevention Institute, will work with Dr. Gutin on the study. Also, Dr. William H. Hoffman, MCG pediatric endocrinologist, and Dr. Reda Bassali, MCG pediatrician, will follow participants' insulin sensitivity and overall health.

At Home in America

Christine Hurley Deriso

They had nothing, really, when they came to America … no home, no transportation, no way to communicate, no money except the tidily rounded sum of $100 in cash.

Yet, by their reckoning, they had everything. When the Dudelzak family came to Marietta, Ga., in 1991 as refugees fleeing the political instability and anti-Semitism of their native Latvia, they knew that their destiny was finally in their own hands. They had never stepped foot on American soil before in their lives, yet as soon as they arrived, they knew they were home.

Boris and Stella Dudelzak and their son, Yakov, lived in poverty in Latvia—a Baltic country under Communist rule until the Soviet Union crumbled in 1991. They lived in a one-bedroom apartment and earned the same paltry state salary no matter how hard they worked. Boris was a surgeon and Stella a dentist, yet such seemingly lofty credentials carried almost no weight in Latvia. "Doctors did not receive a lot of money in Latvia; it was one of the lowest-paying jobs," said Yakov, pronounced Jacob. But Yakov, whose grandfathers also were physicians, learned from his parents that health care is fulfilling in a way that dollars and cents could never measure. Remuneration wasn't a factor in their career choices.

Yet their quality of life under Communist rule suffered in ways that *did* matter. "In school, I was always labeled as a Jew, and there's certain animosity that goes

along with that," Yakov said. "I certainly felt it with all the different remarks and official discrimination." For instance, Yakov's chance of obtaining a college education in Latvia was woefully slim; he would have to significantly outshine his non-Jewish peers to even be considered for admission. His parents wanted better for their son.

And they were willing to turn their lives upside down to make it happen. When Yakov was 12, they received political asylum and fled, virtually penniless, to Georgia. They didn't speak a word of English and knew no one in Marietta except one relative. A local synagogue helped the family get on their feet, but new friends soon discovered the amazing resilience and initiative of the Dudelzak family. Yakov's father and mother quickly found work as a surgical and dental assistant, respectively; yes, they were overqualified, but they were thrilled to be employed. Yakov enrolled in public school and made fast friends who enjoyed introducing him to the English language.

"I just immersed myself in school," Yakov said. "The only subject I could do something with at first was math—no words, just numbers. But everybody was extremely encouraging, teaching me new words. I learned quickly because of their help, and I'm really grateful for that."

He and his parents studied English every evening. All three are now fluent.

They wasted no time in fulfilling other goals as well. Yakov's father began medical school for a second time and his mother enrolled in the Program for Foreign Dental Graduates so they would be qualified to practice in the United States.

"A lot of [their studies] were repetitive, but there was a lot new to learn," Yakov said. "It was frustrating to do it all over again, but they love it so much that they didn't mind. It took years of hard work. I'm really proud of them, to do it twice in one life." Yakov's father is currently completing a surgery residency at Long Beach Medical Center in New York. His mother is again practicing dentistry.

As they retrained in their fields, Yakov was busy making his own mark in academia. He sprinted through middle school, then high school, graduating from Marietta's Wheeler High School with a grade point average of 4.236. "I worked really hard," he explained simply. "And I had my parents' constant support."

But school work wasn't his only pursuit. He played in the school band and began a volunteer effort that he continues to this day: serving as a Russian interpreter in doctors' offices, dental offices and hospitals. "I saw how happy were these ordinary [Russian-speaking] patients that someone could understand their problems in their native language," Yakov said. "These Russian people do not know the rules and regulations, the laws and history of this country. So I am trying to help and explain to them as much as I can."

He received a full scholarship to Georgia State University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in biological sciences in just two years. He supplemented his class work with research in GSU's Dr. Julia Hilliard B Virus Resource Laboratory of the National Institutes of Health, working to produce human antibodies against Herpes B Virus and uncovering the infection mechanisms of the fungus, Rhizopus. His resulting scientific articles were published. He graduated at age 19 as the class valedictorian, distinguishing himself as the youngest graduate in the history of the school and personally receiving an award of commendation from the governor.

Next stop? The Medical College of Georgia, of course. He has just begun his sophomore year in the School of Medicine, earning a perfect 4.0 average his freshman year. "I like the professors, my fellow students, the subject matter … everything. Medicine is incredible," Yakov said. "I love it."

That hasn't gone unnoticed. "Yakov is one of those delightful students who, in addition to academic achievement, has seemingly endless gratitude for any help you impart to him," said Dr. Mike Barrett, who taught him anatomy last year. "He also has basically a servant attitude, characterized by a willingness to help others, including his fellow students, in any way he can. That speaks to his character; it's a very nice quality to see in medicine. He's trying to give back to the community."

Dr. Gary Bond concurs. "What makes him special is his extreme respect and thankfulness to the citizens of Georgia because of their open-door policy to his family and the opportunities provided to him," said Dr. Bond, who was associate dean for admissions in the School of Medicine when Yakov applied.

"Medical school is even better than I imagined it would be," said Yakov, noting his excitement to pursue medicine in the midst of breakneck advances in the field, including the nearly completed genome-mapping project. "We're doing things in medicine even now that just a few years ago were unimaginable. And now, by cracking the genetic code, we can make medicines target specific pathogens. Now, many treatments are so non-specific. But we will soon have drugs specific to receptors, and many new treatments."

As eagerly as Yakov has embraced America, he decidedly eschews materialism. He lives simply, as he has all his life, and his only financial goal is to help his parents repay thousands of dollars in educational loans.

"I don't care about money," Yakov said. "I would do anything to become a doctor. My father and his father before him felt the same way. By becoming a doctor, I could pay back a little part to the people of this country who made me what I am today and will become tomorrow."

To this day, he marvels at what he considers to be the greatest fortune known to man. "[I'm] a poor emigrant who came to this country without knowing a word in English. Not long ago, I had the honor of becoming a citizen of this great nation and graduating from college practically without paying for education, only because of the help of people. America is the land of opportunity."

TOPPLING BARRIERS

Deborah G. Steele

Think about your daily routine for a moment: the stairs you climb, the curbs you step on, the elevator buttons you push, the shelves you store your supplies on....

Now imagine following this same routine as a disabled person. Can you still function?

The Medical College of Georgia Department of Occupational Therapy's curriculum encourages students to continually consider these issues.

Ryan Mitchell, a senior occupational therapy student at MCG, says his observation skills have sharpened as he's gone through the program. "It becomes second nature to see if there are any barriers a person might encounter," he said. "It's more habitual than anything."

During the two-year bachelor's degree program, Ryan and his classmates conduct home-, community- and work-based assessments. For home and community assessments, students look

for architectural and transit barriers impeding disabled residents from functioning independently. "Practice going up or down stairs with a cane or on crutches," said Melissa Young, a senior occupational therapy student. "There are so many things we take for granted. If you have a disability, it will take you longer to reach the top of the stairs or get from one place to another."

For work assessments, students evaluate employee work stations to determine if chair, desk, machine and equipment heights, work stations and tool designs, work flow environmental conditions and methods of material handling enhance the working environment.

Recognizing the barriers people encounter in the community, home and office has made it easier for Ryan and Melissa to offer suggestions to clients, care givers, homeowners, business owners and employers.

"The students are taught to recognize the problems that people encounter and to offer helpful solutions to those problems," said Ricky Joseph, assistant program director for occupational therapy. "In the workplace, there may be problems with the employee who has developed a cumulative trauma—back pain, wrist aches, eye strain—because the workstations are not positioned so that they are conducive to the employee.

"Employees are taught how to make low- or no-cost adjustments to prevent cumulative trauma and decrease worker's compensation costs and long-term problems for employees in office settings," said Mr. Joseph, who developed MCG's Work Role and Ergonomics course in conjunction with the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine. "Students are also instructed in methods of teaching the proper way for employees to carry heavy loads—manual material handling—and body mechanics to prevent low-back problems."

Mr. Joseph said a highly functional workplace means fewer employee absences and a more productive work environment. "Most employers are excited about the fact that our students are coming in and giving them recommendations or suggesting changes," he said. "Just getting workers back to work can save employers a lot of money and enhance the employee's perception of himself if he gets back into the work environment early."

Occupational therapy students also visit industrial sites, developing a site-specific injury-prevention program that may call for educational and training programs, physical fitness programs or material management programs.

"This course is designed so students can learn to be consultants in the workplace and industrial sites and immediately apply what they have learned," said Mr. Joseph. "Occupational therapists have been consulting in work areas for years, but the demand in this area is continuing to increase. We want to help students better market themselves with this additional training."

The MCG occupational therapy program also prepares students to work with individuals and their families to determine accessibility for handicapped people.

"Oftentimes, the students will go out in pairs where one takes the other in a wheelchair to see what barriers a client might encounter," said Wendy Buckner, an assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy who teaches students how to conduct home- and community-based assessments. "It gives them an empathy for their patients when they work with them. They get used to that feeling."

In conducting home and community assessments, students look for both fixed and movable barriers. For example, in homes, students are taught to look for rugs that may throw a person off balance, assess if kitchen items are within arms' reach, determine if doorways are wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through, ascertain if the toilet is high or low enough for a disabled person and survey for grab bars in the bathroom and other areas where they may be needed.

"I live in an apartment, so one of the things that would be difficult for a person with a disability would be getting over the hump between the sidewalk and house," said Melissa, 28. "They'd also have to watch their fingers [when navigating tight spaces in a wheelchair] and have difficulty maneuvering around the kitchen."

The students also help the disabled reclaim pleasures such as shopping and dining out. "There are places that are difficult for certain people to navigate and enjoy," said Ryan, "and that's where we come in. We offer suggestions to business owners in an effort to help them understand the problems that some people have shopping in their stores."

Ryan assessed the Roosevelt Monument in Washington, D.C., for the community-based portion of his grade. "I figured it would be interesting to see since [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt was in a wheelchair," he said. "It was an exceptional example of progress. Somebody was obviously thinking about what they were doing when it was built. There were gradual slopes, power-assisted doors and an accessible gift shop. It was a perfect model."

Likewise, Melissa said MCG's Robert B. Greenblatt, M.D. Library is very accessible to disabled individuals. "One of the things I hadn't noticed before was that in the women's bathroom, they have paper towels sitting on the counter," she said. "I realized that was for people who were in a wheelchair and couldn't reach the paper towel dispenser. They have wide aisles, automatic doors and no obstacles on the floor. Other than not being able to get a book off the top shelf, I didn't see any problems."

All buildings constructed after Jan. 26, 1993 must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1993, and public venues receiving permits for construction and renovation after 1995 must comply with the 1993 law, according to Ms. Buckner. Historical buildings can be granted waivers exempting them from complying with the law.

But despite the law, barriers abound for the disabled. MCG wants to ensure that its occupational therapy students are committed to toppling those barriers. "Occupational therapy encompasses helping a person to function in their occupational roles, whether it be homemaker, worker, student or a child at play, and restoring their quality of life," said Mr. Joseph. "And our students are helping to do that."

MEETING IN THE MIDDLE

Toni Baker

The sun was shining on the crowd gathered June 7 in Washington, Ga., and the city's mayor was beaming.

Inside, workers at Persimmon Homes were building modular housing, while outside the rambling manufacturing site a hodgepodge of hometown folk mingled with visitors from Augusta and Athens. "It's a big day," said Mayor Frank Thomas.

The socializing took a short recess while the mayor joined some of the higher-profile visitors on stage to dedicate his brainchild.

"This is a conference center that will bring people together for the betterment of science and us, and we know something good will come of it," the mayor told the crowd. "I like to think of today as not the end of getting this facility ready, but the beginning of a long relationship with the two institutions. All three of us working together, no telling what we can accomplish," said Mayor Thomas who was able to look far enough down the highway to find a way to potentially benefit the city he loves and two universities that are equidistant from it.

The idea for a joint conference center had come to him months before. The retired banker who has called Washington home since his first birthday was having dinner at Another Thyme, a restaurant on the city square, when he saw some out-of-town diners. Medical College of Georgia President Francis J. Tedesco and his wife were having dinner with University of Georgia President Michael F. Adams and his wife.

"Normally I wouldn't have gone over to speak because I didn't go to Georgia and I didn't go to MCG. I went to Auburn. I'm a good War Eagle." But as second-term mayor, he decided he should at least say hi.

"I told them, 'I don't understand. We go to Augusta or Athens when we go to dinner.' And they said, 'Well this is halfway and we meet here quite frequently,'" the mayor recollected.

The fact that the universities' leaders had identified his town as a logical place to meet gave the mayor the idea that all of the schools' administrators and faculty might benefit if they had a designated location to do just that.

He and other community leaders already were working hard to ensure the vitality of their picturesque city with its antebellum homes and strong history. "We have the same problems you have in Augusta," Mayor Thomas said. "We have plenty of water, but the youngest pipes are 26 years old." His city is spending about a half-million dollars annually to replace the aging pipes that went unnoticed far too long.

Some of the city's thoroughfares need work and the city and county governments don't always get along. The quiet, clean city has a drug problem lurking in its midst and the police are having trouble nabbing the "big boys." The city square has many thriving businesses but a few vacant buildings as well. "We disguise them by decorating the windows," the mayor said.

But there is very much right in this city where many homes and businesses proudly display historical plaques and where scooters still drive up to back yards to pick up the trash.

City leaders are working toward a future that maintains the small-city flavor while bringing new industry to the mix. As he drives around town, Mayor Thomas points to houses whose owners

work in Augusta, Athens and Atlanta, but who have chosen to live in his city. He points out numerous historical landmarks and recites the laundry list of businesses—primarily manufacturing plants that make everything from hospital bed pads to laminated beams—that fuel the economy.

And the mayor talks about the Washington-Wilkes County Incubator Group that supports fledgling businesses in the hope that the return will be new businesses for Washington.

Although MCG and UGA hardly qualify as new ventures, the mayor's idea for a relationship with the universities fits the city's general philosophy and the universities' philosophies as well.

The 66-year-old mayor first broached the topic with his doctor and friend, Dr. Daniel W. Rahn, an MCG rheumatologist and medical director of MCG's clinical system. Dr. Rahn told him the right people to call.

Dr. Matthew J. Kluger was still wetting his feet as vice president for research at MCG when he got the mayor's call. But he already was spearheading discussions with UGA officials to strengthen the natural relationship between the state's health sciences university and flagship liberal arts university.

Dr. Kluger immediately warmed to Mayor Thomas's idea of creating an MCG-UGA meeting center in his town. "He's a risk-taker and that's great," Dr. Kluger said. "He knows that there's a possibility that the only thing the city will get out of this, besides a little publicity, is an occasional meeting that will bring a little money into the economy for lunches. But they are willing to gamble, because maybe a collaboration will be established between MCG and UGA that will lead to commercialization of some idea and company officials will say, 'Washington is a nice little town....'"

Mayor Thomas knew intuitively some of the right people to call for help. One of the first was Ken Parris, president of Persimmon Homes, a modular home manufacturing company that had recently moved into a rambling facility where cloth was once dyed.

Not surprisingly, it was geography that brought Persimmon Homes to Washington. "We did fairly extensive market studies of all states from Virginia to Mississippi to look at housing starts, because that's our business," Mr. Parris said. "We found the epicenter of the largest concentration of housing starts was where the Georgia and South Carolina lines and Interstate 85 intersect and we just started looking in concentric circles."

They got to Washington and stopped looking. "The people were just great," and there was a vacant facility that met his needs. The move to Washington meant a move from Atlanta for Mr. Parris. But for a guy who grew up in a small town, that was OK. "I kid everybody in Atlanta that after having been here a year now, I'm re-civilized."

As he listened to the mayor talk about hopes for a Washington-Wilkes Research Conference Center for MCG and UGA, Mr. Parris decided that the universities might make good roommates and agreed to provide the space. "Anything we could do to help, we are thrilled to do," he said.

MCG and UGA officials were hooked as well. Dr. Barry D. Goldstein, MCG senior vice president for academic affairs, and Dr. Karen Holbrook, UGA senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, had been discussing the natural coupling for about two years. MCG has a thriving biomedical

Ribbon-cutting at the center

research program and easy patient access for clinical trials. UGA has growing biomedical research initiatives and numerous complementary strengths such as chemistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine and agriculture. Increased collaboration, especially in key areas such as the governor's statewide cancer initiative or a statewide Alzheimer's or obesity center, should prove a win-win situation for research as well as academic endeavors, university officials say.

They stress that collaboration already exists between the two institutions and with countless others as well, but that a concerted effort by top management likely will bear even more fruit.

"When you create collaborative arrangements, it naturally builds your research productivity," Dr. Goldstein said. "You stimulate more ideas, you write more grants, you publish more data, your scientists become more recognized nationally and internationally. You have the ability to create more intellectual property which has the potential for stimulation of technology transfer."

Dr. Holbrook echoed his sentiments. "I think the state deserves to have its two institutions working together. It's not just important for us, but it's very important for the citizens of Georgia, and the state really can't afford to have us not working together," she said.

The research conference center will facilitate those discussions and relationships, she said, and ideally return to Washington some of its generosity by spurring economic development.

Another concrete sign of support is the universities' pursuit of approximately $5 million in state funds to build an infrastructure between the schools that will foster collaboration, including recruitment of key faculty and startup funds to establish senior researchers, Dr. Goldstein said.

"In chemistry there is an activation energy you need in order to get reactions to occur, and when people are located 100 miles apart, that requires a little bit of activation energy," Dr. Kluger said. "That activation energy could be that MCG has some capability that is so outstanding, such as clinical samples or core facilities, or UGA has terrific core labs or some researcher with terrific skills that makes a person say, 'No matter what it takes, I'm going to collaborate.' [But] sometimes to reach that activation energy you also have to throw in the real possibility of intramural money or strategically hiring new faculty, someone whose expressed goal, even if housed one place or the other, is to build bridges between the two campuses."

A similar joint funding proposal made it to the University System of Georgia Board of Regents budget last year, but not to the governor's budget. MCG's vice president for research admits to a collective sigh at the time, but no one gave up.

A similar proposal this year may become a reality. In the meantime, each university committed $150,000 to fund a limited number of joint studies. "We are doing this because each university really wants to see the collaboration work," Dr. Kluger said.

From his perspective halfway between the two academic and research giants, the mayor of Washington couldn't agree more.

"This is the fun part: When you approach from Augusta, the [center's] sign says Medical College of Georgia-University of Georgia Research Conference Center," he said. Riding in from Athens, the Bulldogs get top billing.

For the two universities looking for common ground, the mayor gets top billing in all directions.

A Better Life

Christine Hurley Deriso

Dr. Sylvester McRae grew up in poverty, but he had way too much fun to notice.

As a child, he hauled wood in the evenings and picked crops during the summer to help make ends meet for his family, but these jobs never struck him as hardships. He had plenty of free time.

"We went swimming in the creek, played baseball, went fishing … we had a great life," says Dr. McRae, a 1978 graduate of the Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine and newly elected member of the MCG Foundation, Inc.

He, his four brothers and sister were happy to pitch in to supplement the incomes of his mother, a hairdresser, and his father, who labored all day in a lumber mill for an annual salary of about $3,500, then chopped and sold firewood in the evenings.

"We would drive for my father and haul wood," Dr. McRae says. "It was work, but it was fair. He always gave us an allowance and lunch money. Then, during the summer, we would store wood for the winter and pick cotton and peas to help buy our school clothes. My parents' thinking was, 'Do as much as you can for yourself and you'll appreciate it more.' You kind of took a little pride in knowing you actually supplied the money to purchase your clothes."

Luxuries were unheard of, but he certainly didn't feel deprived; after all, virtually everyone in the small farming town of Helena, Ga., was in the same boat. "I didn't discover I was poor until some years later," he notes with a laugh. "Everybody in the county was poor. The only class distinctions were poor, poorer and poorest."

His parents never pushed him in school—"the only grade my father ever paid attention to was my conduct grade"—yet they somehow conveyed an assumption of high achievement. Their children didn't disappoint them.

"I made good grades, particularly in science. It was interesting, so it was easy. My parents never pushed us to do anything but to become educated so we could have a better life. We wanted to do our best; if we didn't, we would have felt like we'd let them down."

All of the McRae children graduated from Fort Valley State College (now Fort Valley State University), and their scientific minds led them farther still. Dr. McRae's sister pursued a career in education. One brother became one of the first two African American graduates of the MCG School of Dentistry in 1973, and another graduated from the School of Dentistry a decade later. Another brother graduated from the MCG School of Medicine in 1975. Sylvester followed in his

Two generations of McRaes: Dr. Sylvester McRae, top, and his children.

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footsteps, enrolling in the MCG School of Medicine in 1974.

He was one of seven African Americans in his class, but he was undaunted by his minority status. "My purpose for going there was to get a medical education. I was single-mindedly focused on that," Dr. McRae says. "Was the environment overall the most friendly for African Americans? Probably not. But that was not going to deter me from doing what I wanted to do."

He excelled in medical school, though for once in his life, school wasn't exactly a breeze. "I kept the torch turned up," he says with a laugh.

Overall, he looks back on those years with fondness. "MCG gave me a very good education. I've always appreciated that."

He enjoyed all his clinical rotations, but he felt most at home in obstetrics and gynecology. "It felt good knowing I was part of a team and people depended one me," he says.

After graduating and completing his obstetrics/gynecology residency, he practiced for three years in Tallahassee, Fla., before moving his wife and three children to Columbus, Ga., which they still call home. He found it easy to establish a new practice.

"I find that if you treat people nicely and practice good medicine, word gets around," Dr. McRae says.

"He does a wonderful job treating patients and serving our community," says Dr. Cecil Whitaker, also an alumnus, MCG Foundation board member and obstetrician/gynecologist in Columbus. "He's been an excellent member of the medical community in Columbus."

Despite a grueling schedule—Dr. McRae delivers about 250 babies a year—he insists he's "cut back some." He rarely stepped foot outside of Helena, Ga., as a child, but his children have traveled the world with their parents. As happy as he is to have provided so abundantly for his family, he has worried occasionally that his children might lack perspective. "A part of my motivation was my surroundings," he says. "I wanted a better life. But this is all my children have ever known."

He needn't have worried; motivation in the McRae family seemingly is in the genes. The McRaes' oldest son just graduated from Emory University and is working on Wall Street for a while before earning his M.B.A.; his 19-year-old son is a pre-med student in college and his daughter is a high-achieving high school student.

With his children nearly raised and his practice running like clockwork, Dr. McRae is eager to make his mark as a member of the MCG Foundation. He hopes to inspire young people who enjoy no advantages of privilege yet whose innate assets may inspire them to travel the same path he walked 25 years ago. "I want to see an effort going into recruiting and retaining African American students," he says.

And he doesn't want to forget the ones who have already completed the journey. "I think I might be able to give a perspective on how to reach out to minority graduates. They're out there."

Gifts of Mutual Fund Shares

In the past, we have discussed how and why appreciated assets held for longer than 12 months are the most cost-effective way to make gifts to the Medical College of Georgia. This discussion has generally centered on individual stocks and real estate. However, with over 77 million individual investors owning shares in mutual funds, it is important to remember that mutual fund shares can also appreciate highly. A gift of appreciated mutual fund shares benefit from a full market value charitable deduction as well as avoidance of capital gains taxation just as individual stocks.

How to make a gift of mutual fund shares

The most important thing to remember is never sell the shares before giving them as a gift. If the shares are sold first, the gift becomes one of cash rather than shares of your mutual fund. This will cause you to be taxed on the full amount of the capital gains. The gift must be made as a direct transfer from your mutual fund account to an account held by the MCG Foundation.

You will need to let MCG know of your intentions to make a gift in this manner. We can furnish you with our account information if we currently have one with your mutual fund company or we can immediately open one to complete your gift. The following is a sample letter you can send to your mutual fund company:

> I would like to make a charitable gift to the Medical College of Georgia Foundation, Inc. of my shares/units in THE NAME OF FUND. Please transfer (not exchange or redeem) FILL IN BLANK number of shares in the fund from my account number FILL IN BLANK to a new account in the fund in the name of the Medical College of Georgia Foundation, Inc., tax identification number FILL IN BLANK. Enclosed is a recent statement of my account with your firm.
>
> Send confirmation of this transfer to me and to the Medical College of Georgia at the following address. Also, please provide the name and telephone number of the staff person who will process the application.
>
> Medical College of Georgia
> Office of Gift Planning
> FI-1000, Alumni Center
> Augusta, GA 30912

Gifts that pay you back

Shares of mutual funds are also a good choice to fund an income producing gift such as a Charitable Remainder Trust or a Charitable Gift Annuity. The amount of taxation levied on the income payments from these gift arrangements is determined by the cost basis (basically, what you paid for the share adjusted for income and capital gain dividends) of the individual shares used to make the gift. Determining this cost basis can be somewhat complicated if you have reinvested income and capital gains over time. If you have not kept all the necessary records for determining this cost basis, you can request that your mutual fund company provide you with the cost basis for the shares held in your account. You will need to request a complete statement of your account from inception reflecting shares, net asset value and net amount of all transactions, including dividend and capital gain reinvestment.

There are a five ways you can choose to classify the shares you give to determine the cost basis.

1. *First-in, First-Out (FIFO).* This default method requires no action on your part. The FIFO method uses the first, or oldest shares, to make any transfers.
2. *Last-in, Last-Out (LIFO).* The LIFO method uses the last, or newest, shares in the fund to make any transfers. Be careful if you choose this method; any shares held less than 12 months will not qualify for favorable long-term capital gains treatment and your charitable deduction will be based on original cost, not full market value.
3. *Specific Shares.* With this method, you may specify exactly which shares you want to transfer.
4. *Average Cost-Single Category.* This method takes the average cost of all shares owned, those held long-term and those held short-term.
5. *Average Cost-Double Category.* This method is the same as above, except that it separately determines the average cost for long-term shares and short-term shares.

For information on planning your giving, please contact me, Troy Breitmann, at 1-800-869-1113. Of course, all financial decisions should be discussed with your legal and tax advisors.

Graduates Urged to Persevere Amid Challenges

Christine Hurley Deriso

Government officials owe it to health care practitioners to remove the barriers that impede their best work, according to Georgia Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor.

"You have trained long and hard for the opportunity to help others; the least we can do is make it as easy and as rewarding as possible for you to do just that," said Lt. Gov. Taylor, the guest speaker at the Medical College of Georgia 2000 commencement ceremony May 5.

Georgia is working hard to topple those barriers, he said, noting initiatives in the state such as increased Medicaid eligibility and a Patient Bill of Rights. And MCG has led the way in enhancing access to health care, particularly for rural citizens, through innovations such as telemedicine and distance-learning, he noted.

"I am proud that Georgia is a world leader in this kind of technology, and I fully expect other technological advances to connect Georgia in ways we never thought possible. MCG is a leader in this endeavor because its leaders have responded to change and have fought for this institution's survival," he said.

He lauded MCG's perseverance in fulfilling its missions of health care, research and education in the face of unprecedented challenges. "It is no secret that research hospitals are at a disadvantage because they compete with non-teaching, non-research facilities for the same access to Medicare and other forms of funding," he said. "Dr. Tedesco, thank you for allowing MCG to continue its excellent care."

He urged MCG graduates to likewise persevere even when the challenges seem formidable. "As lieutenant governor, I ... understand that you have chosen this path because you want to help others," he said. "I know that for me personally, I find great joy in the opportunity to give back to the great state of Georgia through public service. Like you, I want to give back to this state that has given me so much."

Lt. Gov. Taylor expressed confidence that MCG graduates are up to the challenge. "Your hands are at the wheel of your future, this community's future and our state's future," he said. "Looking over this crowd, I feel absolutely safe riding with you."

MCG Wins Fund-Raising Award

The Medical College of Georgia has received a Council for Advancement and Support of Education award for its success in fund-raising.

The CASE 2000 Circle of Excellence in Educational Fund-Raising Award "honors superior fund-raising programs across the country," according to Patricia Jackson, CASE vice president for education.

The assets of the MCG Foundation, Inc., have grown more than tenfold in the past decade to more than $119 million, according to Dr. James B. Osborne, president and chief executive officer of the MCG Foundation. Those assets have funded 27 endowed academic/research chairs, a $20 million research endowment and numerous endowed scholarships, fellowships and lectureships, Dr. Osborne said.

"The past four or five years have been especially productive for MCG as fund-raising efforts continued to exceed expectations," said Dr. Osborne, who served as MCG vice president for university advancement from 1990 until his MCG Foundation appointment July 1. "Alumni and friends have demonstrated through their generosity how vital they believe medical education is in building a stronger society for tomorrow. The private support has enabled MCG to move forward toward its goal of becoming a leading health sciences university in the Southeast and to push forward to becoming one of the best in the country."

"People traditionally don't think of having to support a state institution," said MCG President Francis J. Tedesco, noting that the state covers less than a third of the institution's expenses. "To get to the next level, we've had to tap into private support. Once that message came across, the private sector has been very, very supportive."

Dr. James B. Osborne

Mr. Howerton Named Interim Vice President

Christine Hurley Deriso

Bruce Howerton, senior director of development at the Medical College of Georgia, has been named interim vice president for university advancement. He succeeds Dr. James B. Osborne, who has been named president and chief executive officer of the MCG Foundation, Inc.

Mr. Howerton oversees MCG's efforts in development, public relations, marketing and alumni affairs.

Bruce Howerton

"He is well-qualified and has demonstrated his competence over the years in institutional development work, advancement and public relations," said MCG President Francis J. Tedesco.

Mr. Howerton earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master of business administration degree in accounting from Augusta State University. He joined MCG in 1980 as accountant for the MCG Foundation, Inc. He was named assistant director of institutional relations in 1985, director of planned giving in 1989 and senior director of development in 1998. He also served as interim vice president for university advancement from 1988 to 1989.

He is a member of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, the Georgia Higher Education Advancement Council, the Georgia Planned Giving Council and the Augusta Estate Planning Council.

2 New Chairs Established at MCG

Sally Lofton Simkins

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents has established two new chairs at the Medical College of Georgia.

The Edgar R. Pund, M.D. Distinguished Chair in Pathology and the Dr. Walter L. Shepeard Clinical Pathology Chair will support a faculty member in the Department of Pathology.

Dr. Pund was a 1918 MCG graduate and served on the faculty from 1921 through 1958. He chaired the Department of Pathology from 1931 to 1953 and was president of MCG from 1953 to 1958.

Dr. Shepeard joined the MCG faculty in 1948 as director of clinical pathology at University Hospital. He transferred to full-time pathology faculty status in 1955 and became director of clinical pathology when the Eugene Talmadge Memorial Hospital (now MCG Hospital and Clinics) opened in 1956. He retired and joined the emeritus faculty in 1971 and continued to teach until his death in 1978. To commemorate his contributions in the area of blood banking, the blood bank in Augusta is named in his memory.

Class Notes

School of Allied Health Sciences

Kelly Belknap McClain (physical therapy, '94), Augusta, and her husband, Dr. Matthew McClain (School of Medicine, 2000) announce the birth of their first baby, Jackson Wade, Feb. 21, 2000.

School of Dentistry

Dr. John Vollenweider ('78), LaGrange, Ga., has been elected president of the Georgia Board of Dentistry. His tenure began July 1. He and wife Claire have two children. Paul, 19, is a freshman at Georgia Southern University and Leigh Anne, 16, is a junior at LaGrange Senior High School. Dr. Vollenweider has practiced dentistry in LaGrange for 22 years.

School of Medicine

Dr. H. Wilder Smith ('46), a retired primary care physician in Swainsboro, Ga., owns and operates a medical museum with items from five generations of Smith physicians, all of whom graduated from MCG. The museum, which also contains many older instruments and documents, is open by appointment Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 2–5 p.m. Admission is free.

Dr. L. Kendrick Lewis ('56) was recognized for his years of service to Morgan County and Morgan Memorial Hospital by having the hospital's new L. Kendrick Lewis Wing named in his honor. Dr. Lewis is in family practice in Madison, Ga.

Dr. Russell Vaughn Maples ('75), Greenville, S.C., was selected for fellowship in the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology in the year 2000. He edited the May issue of the Journal of South Carolina Medical Association's "Symposium on Allergic Disease."

Dr. Raymond P. Warrell Jr. ('75) completed the first half of his career at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center as associate physician-in-chief and professor of medicine at Cornell University. In December 1999, he was appointed president and chief executive officer at Genta Inc. (Nasdaq: GNTA), a biotechnology firm in Berkely Heights, N.J., which specializes in innovative anti-cancer therapies, particularly the application of antisense technology against novel genomic targets.

Dr. Mary Alice Barrow Llera ('90), Ashland, Ky., married Dr. Rene Antonio Llera July 10, 2000 at the Grand Hotel, Mackinaw Island, Mich. She practices internal medicine at Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital, South Shore Outreach Center. Her husband practice anesthesiology at Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital.

Dr. Dean Broome ('92) has joined the Backus Children's Hospital at Memorial Health University Medical Center in Savannah, Ga., as the hospital's first pediatric endocrinologist.

Deadline for submitting information for publication in the winter issue of AlumNews is October 27, 2000.

Alumni! Let us know what's new with you by taking a moment to fill out this form. Also, please send us your curriculum vitae so we can keep your files up-to-date.

☐ Male ☐ Female

Today's date

Name

Telephone number

School graduated from

Degree Class year

Street address ☐ Check if new address

City State Zip

Present specialty and place of training

Professional news (attach additional page if needed)

Personal news (photos welcome)

Please send to: *Christine Hurley Deriso, FI-1042, Medical College of Georgia; Augusta, GA 30912; fax to (706) 721-6723 or e-mail to cderiso@mail.mcg.edu.*

Courtesy The Augusta Chronicle

Angela Moore

Occupational Therapy Student Receives Beard Award

Christine Hurley Deriso

Angela Moore, a 2000 graduate of the Medical College of Georgia Department of Occupational Therapy, has received the 2000 John F. Beard Award.

The $25,000 award is presented annually by William Porter "Billy" Payne and his wife, Martha, to a graduating MCG student who exemplifies caring and compassion in health care.

Mr. Payne, vice chairman of Atlanta-based Premiere Technologies, Inc., and former chairman of the Atlanta Olympic Organizing Committee, established the award in 1998 to memorialize his father-in-law, who died in 1997.

The award honors MCG President Francis J. Tedesco and Mr. Beard's physician, Dr. Mark F. Williams, a 1988 graduate of the MCG School of Medicine and chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore. Dr. Williams treated Mr. Beard, who had a malignant tumor, while on the faculty at MCG. Dr. Tedesco visited Mr. Beard twice daily during his lengthy stay at MCG Hospital.

Ms. Moore, of Augusta, was cited by her instructors and fellow students for her compassion, integrity and professionalism. She "demonstrates the highest ideals of compassion for the welfare and independence of her patient and their families," the Department of Occupational Therapy faculty wrote in nominating her for the award. "She has dedicated her time, energies and finances to ensure that her patients and significant others receive the greatest benefit from their interaction with the health care environment."

Ms. Moore, who also earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from MCG in 1994, is a student member of the Georgia Occupational Therapy Association and the American Occupational Therapy Association. She has volunteered extensively to enhance patient care and research in areas such as Alzheimer's disease and spinal cord injuries.

New Director Draws on Vibrant Past

Sally Lofton Simkins

Steve Harrison is an artist, a medical illustrator, a wanna-be race car driver and a collector of native

American art. He's drawn brains and hearts; he's filmed surgeries and football games. He is a teacher and a student.

Mr. Harrison, chairman of the Medical College of Georgia Department of Medical Illustration since 1994, added a new credential July 1: MCG director of health communications.

Health communications includes television services, medical photography, medical illustration and design and electronic maintenance. One of his top priorities is to rebuild television services, which is losing five of seven staff members to early retirement or other positions.

Mr. Harrison, a New York native, earned bachelor's and master's degrees in medical illustration from MCG. He's been on an interesting road ever since, including stops as a staff medical illustrator at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, director of biomedical communications at Arizona Heart Institute and St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, assistant professor of biomedical communications at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, medical art director of Video Art Studios at the Arizona Heart Institute in Phoenix and artist-in-residence at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix.

He returned to MCG in 1991 as an assistant professor in the Department of Medical Illustration, one of only five accredited medical illustration programs in the country. He was named acting chairman and assistant professor in 1993 and chairman in 1994. He was named an associate professor in 1998.

He considers his stint as medical art director in the Video Art Studios of Arizona Heart Institute one of his most interesting. "It was very dynamic and there were many unusual opportunities," he said. "It wasn't just sitting down and drawing anatomy and surgery, which I love, too, but this was very different."

While at the heart institute, he witnessed and illustrated the first heart-lung transplant in Arizona and illustrated and published the first heart transplant surgery. "We made award-winning surgical teaching films while I was there," he said. The department also broadcast the first live surgery in television history in 1983 through PBS to a worldwide audience. He also video taped Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater's heart surgery. "I stood over Goldwater's chest and videotaped and edited his triple bypass surgery for the five o'clock news," he said.

"The director of the Heart Institute, Dr. Ted Diethrich, a heart surgeon, loved and knew the value of medical communication and medical illustration and how to use them," Mr. Harrison said. Most of what they did was educational videotapes, but Dr. Diethrich had other interests as well.

"Ted loved sailing, so our department owned a sailboat," Mr. Harrison said. "We made sailing films and sold footage in addition to the medical communications films. We also owned a team in the U.S. Football League and did all of the game films and practice films."

A branding iron Mr. Harrison had a blacksmith make as a prop for a television commercial for the Arizona Wranglers stands by the fireplace in his living room.

"It was very interesting in that I was able to watch heart surgery one day and film the football team or the cheerleaders the next," he said. "It made for a fascinating job."

Among the pictures on the wall in Mr. Harrison's office is one of him in an open-wheel race car: another piece of his past that hints at the other side of Steve Harrison.

"I've always had a love and interest in racing," he said. "I lived it vicariously through my neighbor in Phoenix, and later through my son [who builds race cars]. My neighbor and I went through a couple of cars and I got hooked on open-wheel racing. I decided for a while that I would do some driving and have gone to some racing schools."

For now, Mr. Harrison is content to watch, rather than race. He has season tickets to the Phoenix International Raceway, went to the Indianapolis 500 and hopes to get back out to Phoenix for the NASCAR race.

"I still have the interest in racing, but I can't afford to do it," he said. "I'd probably end up killing myself at this point in my life, anyway. I don't know if I'm as dextrous as I used to be and my reaction time is such that I'd probably end up in the wall."

For the past four years, Mr. Harrison has been working toward his doctorate in art at the University of Georgia in Athens. He began his dissertation this fall. His topic: The Maintenance of Traditional Methods and Symbolism in Navajo and Pueblo Indian Art. "I'm looking at how it is taught and how it is passed down, as well as its meaning to the people and their culture," he said. "They have a really rich history. I admire the people and their art."

He enjoys showing, through his illustrations, something as it's never been shown before. "An illustration can show something that can't be seen, or be seen the way you want it to be," he said. "An illustration can take the blood away from a surgical field to show the anatomy, or to show what a perfect situation would be. It also can depict something that happened in the past. When working in Dallas, I was called on to do some illustrations for a journal depicting the repair of a gunshot wound and showing the path of the bullet. It was a gripping story of what happened to this child and how he was saved, but they needed something a little more clinical to show the emergency measures taken to save the child's life.

"That's the fun part of this profession and something we try to get our students excited about: to draw what's never been seen and tell about it without saying a word. That's what we do."

Dr. Bradley Named Continuing Education Director

Sally Lofton Simkins

Dr. Kathy Bradley has been named director of the Department of Continuing Education at the Medical College of Georgia. She also will continue to serve as chairman and associate professor in the Occupational Therapy Department of the MCG School of Allied Health Sciences.

Dr. Bradley was named to her current position in the School of Allied Health Sciences in 1998 after having served as a clinical associate professor since 1992. She joined the MCG faculty as an instructor in 1978. She also serves as an adjunct clinical associate professor at the Medical University of South Carolina, a faculty advisor and consultant at Brenau College and a member of the clinical faculty of the University of St. Augustine Health Science. From 1991 to 1998, she was division director of clinical education and professional education for NovaCare, Inc., a national rehabilitation company.

Dr. Bradley, who received a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy and master's degree in health education from MCG, received her doctorate in education from the University of Georgia.

MCG Offers New Certificate Program

The Medical College of Georgia Department of Health Information Management has been approved to offer a post-baccalaureate certificate program in health information administration to licensed nurses and allied health professionals.

"There is a growing demand for multi-credentialed health care professionals and an unmet demand for health information professionals," said Jim Condon, MCG health information management program specialist.

Students who complete the 11-month program will be qualified to take the American Health Information Management Association's registration examination. Those who pass the examination will earn the health information administrator credential.

For more information about the program, contact Mr. Condon, (706) 721-3436.

Ms. Creel Named Chairman of Faculty Organization

Teru A. Creel, assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy, has been named chairman of the Medical College of Georgia School of Allied Health Sciences Faculty Organization for fiscal year 2001.

Ms. Creel has served on the MCG faculty since 1993. She earned a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from MCG in 1985 and a master's degree in health care policy and administration from Mercer University of Atlanta in 1993. She has served as director of occupational therapy at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville, Ga., and as an occupational therapist and supervisor in inpatient rehabilitation at the Emory University Hospital Center for Rehab Medicine.

Ms. Creel received the 2000 American Occupational Therapy Association's Service Award and the association's Recognition of Achievement Award in 1998. She was named to Alpha Eta Society, National Honor Society for Allied Health Professionals in 1997 and was named the Outstanding Registered Occupational Therapist of Georgia for 1993-94.

She received the Georgia Society of Allied Health Professions Leadership Award in 1994. A member of the Georgia society since 1996, she has served as its treasurer since 1998.

Ms. Garlington Honored by Alma Mater

Sally Lofton Simkins

Octavia Garlington, professor emeritus in the Medical College of Georgia School of Allied Health Sciences, was honored by Converse College for outstanding service at the college's commencement program in Spartanburg, S. C., May 20.

Ms. Garlington received the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award for outstanding service to her school and community. A 1949 biology graduate of Converse, Ms. Garlington received a master of science degree in medical illustration from the Medical College of Georgia in 1961. She joined the faculty of the MCG Department of Medical Illustration after graduation and served until her retirement as a professor in 1990.

Ms. Garlington is a member and past officer of the Association of Medical Illustrators and a member of the Augusta Genealogical Society.

Convenience is Key to Success of Distance-Learning Program

Christine Hurley Deriso

A six-hour commute vs. a short stroll on campus.

Thanks to a distance-learning degree offered on campus through Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Ga., the stroll has precluded the commute. In fall 1995, the university began offering course work leading to the master of health services administration degree on the MCG campus.

Dr. Biagio Vericella, dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences, realized that many Medical College of Georgia health professionals could benefit from the degree but had limited time in the midst of their full-time careers to pursue it. They certainly didn't have the luxury of commuting to Savannah. So Dr. Vericella arranged for the course work to come to them.

"We offer the classes on the MCG campus via distance-learning, we bring the textbooks here, we come here to advise and the students register on line. Everything they need is right here," said Dr. Michelle Dumpe, who with husband David coordinates the program. About 25 MCG employees have graduated from the program since its inception in fall 1995. Most complete the program after about two and a half years of part-time study.

The program, which immerses bachelor's-prepared health care professionals in the business aspects of health care, is particularly pertinent amid the rapidly changing landscape of the field, the Dumpes noted. "This is a business degree that is totally specific to health care," Dr. Michelle Dumpe said. "It creates better health care managers and practitioners."

"As a health care professional, this degree is beneficial to me because it covers the issues and subjects that are necessary to function in today's health care environment," said Bobbie Willcox, MCG pediatrics clinics practice manager, who will graduate from the program next week. "Courses such as managed care and health care financial management are timely for today's managers and administrators. The course work challenges you on many levels, which enhances professional growth."

Heidi Nelson, director of quality management for MCG Hospital and Clinics and a 1995 graduate of the School of Allied Health Sciences, concurs. "The program was an answer to my prayers. It was often tailored for those who have extensive clinical and managerial experience but needed the advanced degree to meet the requirements of their current job description. At the time, I was the interim director of quality management and it afforded me the opportunity [and the confidence] to apply for the director's position."

MCG nurse clinician Kathy Chesrown similarly found that the degree expanded her career options. "About five years ago, I began to feel that I needed a master's degree to be competitive for positions I was interested in," she said. "Initially, I intended to pursue a master's degree in nursing administration, but that was about the time hospitals began to downsize administrative structures. The master's degree in health services administration was a good alternative because it offered a broader background and didn't lock me into a nursing track."

Two MCG physicians also have graduated from the program. "I feel that physicians must become knowledgeable about third-party payors (coding, billing and collections) and personnel management, as well as the legal issues surrounding these areas," said Dr. Sharon Kaminer, associate professor of pediatrics in pediatric cardiology. "I have been able to directly apply the knowledge gained, in managing the pediatric cardiology practice site and serving on numerous hospital committees."

Dr. Kaminer's initiative hasn't gone unnoticed; she recently was selected a fellow of the Hedwig van Amerigen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine Program for Women.

The graduates of the program are grateful they were able to obtain the degree so conveniently. "This is a great program, especially for people who work full time," said Ms. Willcox. "I find it much easier to go from the office straight to class. The professors are also responsive to our scheduling needs as much as possible. This has been an enriching experience for me. I have only good things to say about it."

Ms. Chesrown agrees. "This was a very doable program," she said. "The faculty recognized that we all were full-time employees as well as part-time students, and they were very flexible and supportive. Even though this was a distant program, the faculty were accessible and made Augusta a part of the class."

Ms. Nelson noted that she never had to travel any farther than the next-door building on campus for classes.

MCG students enrolled in the program pay only tuition to attend, and they are eligible to apply for tuition reimbursement through the Division of Human Resources. "We've been told this is an incredibly student-friendly program," Dr. Michelle Dumpe said.

Yet she and her husband say the program's biggest asset is the students themselves. "The maturity and motivation level of the students is outstanding," said Dr. David Dumpe. "That's why the program has been as successful as it has."

They also credit MCG's technical support staff for ensuring that distance-learning classes proceed without a hitch. "We had some technological glitches early on, but in the last couple of years, they have been very infrequent," Dr. David Dumpe said. "The technological help we've received from people at MCG has just been phenomenal."

Armstrong hopes to attract other MCG health care professionals to the program. "Armstrong is committed to maintaining the program," Dr. David Dumpe said. "We're really proud of it and the administration completely supports it."

Dr. Hanes Named Associate Dean

Deborah G. Steele

Dr. Carole Hanes, a pediatric dentist at the Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry, has been named associate dean for students, admissions and alumni for the school.

Dr. Hanes will be a liaison between students and the faculty and help coordinate student events and activities. She also will serve as a liaison between the alumni and faculty and help coordinate the review process for prospective students.

"This is a good opportunity for me to grow," said Dr. Hanes, who began her career at MCG in 1986 as an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry. She was named associate professor in 1990 and professor in 1995. Dr. Hanes will continue to teach in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry.

"I consider myself a strong advocate for students and this new position will allow me to interact with both students and faculty," said Dr. Hanes. "This is an opportunity for me to work with dentists in the community and work with them on the students' behalf."

Dr. Hanes will replace Dr. Wallace Edwards, who retiried. She also will assume the admissions and student recruitment activities of Dr. Mike Miller, who has been named associate vice president for academic and student affairs and registrar.

Dr. Carole Hanes

"This is a new position as a result of restructuring on campus and in the dental school," said Dr. David Myers, dean of the MCG School of Dentistry. "Dr. Hanes' background and experience make her well-qualified for this new role."

Dr. Hanes graduated cum laude from the University of Louisville in Kentucky in 1974 with a bachelor of science degree in dental hygiene. She earned the doctorate of dental medicine from the University of Louisville in 1981 and received her certificate in pediatric dentistry from the Eastman Dental Center in 1985. She is serving a one-year term as president of the Board of Directors of the College of Diplomates of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry.

Dr. Miller Named Associate Vice President

Deborah G. Steele

Dr. Mike Miller, director of student admissions and academic support for the MCG School of Dentistry since 1993, has been named associate vice president for academic and student affairs and registrar at the Medical College of Georgia.

Dr. Miller, who holds a doctor of philosophy degree in higher education from Florida State University, assumed his new duties July 1.

As associate vice president, Dr. Miller oversees academic admissions, continuing education, financial aid, health communications (which encompasses television services, medical photography and medical illustration), student affairs, student records and registration and the Student Health Center.

Dr. Mike Miller

Dr. Miller plans to incorporate more modernized technology into the student records system and market academic programs at MCG to meet the health care needs of Georgia.

Alumnus Says Health Care, Politics Inextricably Linked

Deborah G. Steele

Dr. Chris Rouse is rallying to spread the word that if dental students are involved in health care, they also are involved in politics. That's been one of his goals as a legislative consultant to the American Student Dental Association.

"Students care more about what's going on at school, but it's also been my responsibility to keep them informed about legislation that can, and will, impact them," said Dr. Rouse, who graduated this May from the MCG School of Dentistry. "The American Dental Education Association does a lot of different things to lobby and these are things that students should be concerned about."

Dr. Rouse was one of more than 80 dental students to participate in the third annual ADEA/ASDA Dental Student Lobby Day recently on Capitol Hill and meet with congressional leaders to advocate for issues important to dental education and the dental profession. The students particularly urged policymakers to remove the cap on deductible interest on student loan payments, among other provisions.

According to Dr. Rouse, the number of students who finance their education by student loans has increased over the years and the debt has major implications. Young dentists who might choose public service over private practice face the reality of substantial loan repayment, which may deter them from entering careers in public health, teaching, research or the military.

Dr. Rouse, too, thought of the accrued debt as he planned for life after dental school. The 28-year-old father of 3-month-old Blake has decided to complete a one-year training program in advanced education in general dentistry in Jackson, Miss., before entering private practice.

"[The Student Loan Interest Deduction bill] isn't helpful to middle-income people because of the income cap," said Dr. Rouse, whose home is Alpharetta, Ga. "SLID, I think, has [very strong] bipartisan support. I think it has good, broad support, but it keeps getting put in with bills that President Clinton [is vetoing.]"

During his visit to Capitol Hill, Dr. Rouse met with Mac Collins, R-Ga., and staff members for Georgia legislators Nathan Deal, Charlie Norwood, John Linder, John Lewis and Jack Kingston.

In the future, he anticipates dental students lobbying for increased funding for graduate medical education.

Though he isn't sure how many more years students will have to lobby for the elimination of the deductible interest cap, he feels victory is imminent. "I think it will happen, but we just have to keep trying," he said. "We have to be unified on this."

Fluoride Research of Dental Alumnus Awarded

Deborah G. Steele

Dr. John Wasdin, a 1998 graduate of the Medical College of Georgia, is one of eight finalists in the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry's Graduate Student Research Award competition. He conducted the research during his pediatric dentistry residency at MCG.

Dr. Wasdin received a $500 cash award and presented the findings of his research project titled "Plaque Fluoride is Dependent on Plaque Calcium" at the academy's annual conference last month.

For the study, Dr. Wasdin collected plaque samples from adults who brushed their teeth with a fluoride toothpaste and a non-fluoride toothpaste for a week each. The samples were taken one and 12 hours after brushing at the end of each week.

"What we wanted to know was why toothpaste with its high fluoride concentration wasn't more effective in reducing cavities than fluoridated water," said Dr. Wasdin, who practices pediatric dentistry in Statesboro, Ga. "Most studies have shown that optimally fluoridated water—one part per million—reduces the number of dental cavities in a community by about 50 percent. Similar studies have shown that the regular use of fluoride toothpaste—1,000 parts per million—reduced cavities by 30 percent."

Under the direction of Dr. Gary Whitford, a Regents professor at MCG, and Dr. Steven Adair, chairman of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry at MCG, Dr. Wasdin discovered that fluoride toothpaste is no more effective than fluoridated water because the absorption of fluoride into plaque is limited by the amount of calcium in the plaque.

According to Dr. Whitford, the calcium fluoride—the combination of the fluoride and the calcium—dissolves to release "free" fluoride during acid production when plaque bacteria are metabolizing dietary sugars.

"Fluoride inhibits bacterial metabolism and therefore reduces the amount of acid produced, which is the cause of dental cavities," said Dr. Whitford. Research must now be conducted to determine ways to increase calcium in the plaque, leading to an increase in the amount of fluoride retention in plaque.

"Dr. Wasdin's findings do not suggest that persons whose water is fluoridated need not use a fluoride toothpaste," he said. While the amount of calcium is practically the same regardless of whether a fluoride toothpaste is used or not, "clinical and epidemiological studies have shown the prevalence of cavities is somewhat lower if you use fluoride toothpaste and have a fluoridated water supply."

Dr. Conway Wins Young Investigator's Award

Toni Baker

Dr. Simon J. Conway, developmental biologist and geneticist in the Medical College of Georgia Institute of Molecular Medicine and Genetics, is the 2000 winner of the Young Investigator's Award given annually by the International Society for Heart Research—American Section.

Graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and young scientists with less than five years of independent research experience were eligible for the award; the winner was selected by a panel of judges based on the scientific merit of the researcher's manuscript, the quality of the presentation and responses to judges' questions. Dr. Conway was nominated for the award by Dr. Margaret L. Kirby, director of MCG's Developmental Biology Group, who recruited Dr. Conway to MCG in 1996.

Dr. Conway's winning manuscript is titled "Decreased Neural Crest Stem Cell Expansion is Responsible for the Conotruncal Heart Defects Within the Splotch (Sp2H) Pax 3 Mouse Mutant." The research, scheduled to be published in the July edition of *Cardiovascular Research*, explains where the potentially lethal heart defect, persistent truncus arteriosus, originates in a developing heart and opens the door for finding a way to correct the defect. Babies born with the most severe form of persistent truncus arteriosus have a single vessel coming off the heart—rather than two—and a poorly beating heart.

Co-authors on the study to be published in *Cardiovascular Research* include second-year medical student Justin Bundy (see *Volunteer Work Helps Student Refine Career Goal*) and research assistants Jinwen Chen, Eileen Dickman, Rhonda Rogers and Barbara M. Will. Members of his current research team include Dr. Jian Wang, Dr. Shree Koushik, Dr. Michal Machnicki, Dr. Agnieszka Frejtag, Rhonda Rogers and Kristi Singletary.

Volunteer Work Helps Student Refine Career Goal

Toni Baker

Justin Bundy was weighing his higher-education options in spring 1997.

He had earned a biology degree at Furman University and was considering a degree in medicine or biomedical

Dr. Simon J. Conway and Justin Bundy

research when he attended Graduate Student Research Day at the Medical College of Georgia that April.

As he roamed the hallways of the Institute of Molecular Medicine and Genetics, listening to scientists talk about their work, he came to the lab of Dr. Simon J. Conway. "It was fascinating," he said. Dr. Conway explained his work to understand causes of complex heart defects and related abnormalities in children. Afterward Justin asked Dr. Conway if he needed any help in his lab, volunteering his services because he wasn't sure they were worth buying.

Dr. Conway liked his initiative, and what began as a short-term relationship ended up lasting two years with Justin becoming the lab "expert" on some in situ hybridization techniques for certain genes.

"I was frightened at first, because having a biology degree was great, but working in the lab wasn't like an undergraduate science course," Justin said. "Everything was brand new. Everything was live—live mice, live hearts. I was really intimidated."

Justin would ask questions, and Dr. Conway and his staff would offer their time and expertise. "He taught me stuff I needed to know then let me do my own work," Justin said. He looked at different genes and how they interacted in the embryo, eventually taking the work all the way from mice-mating to harvesting embryos. "By the end, he had me doing my own interpretation of the data."

The diligence paid off; Justin, 25, already has published at least five papers. He is lead author of one paper and co-author of a recent study identifying a problem with stem cell proliferation that occurs very early in embryonic development and ultimately results in a severe heart defect called persistent truncus arteriosus. That stem cell work recently garnered Dr. Conway the Young Investigator Award from the International Society for Heart Research—American Section.

The years of work in Dr. Conway's lab have borne other fruit, helping mature Justin prepare for the chore now at hand: medical school. In his search for his niche in the health sciences, Justin decided that being a physician fits him best.

He learned that the pursuit of new information requires a steady, undistracted pace that relies heavily on self-motivation because the rewards often come slowly. Justin didn't experience a "jaw-dropping" discovery—just day after day of working and working some more.

Now as he works toward his goal of being a physician, he is still trying to decide just what kind. "It's hard to eliminate anything," he says, until he sees more of the choices.

Working in the lab was hard but fun for Justin, and medical school is not much different. "I love it. It's hard, but I really enjoy it so I know I'm doing the right thing."

Research Awarded

Toni Baker

Several faculty members, postdoctoral fellows and students in the Medical College of Georgia Department of Physiology and Endocrinology have recently won awards.

Dr. Corey B. Smith, assistant professor, has been selected an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellow. The competitive award from the philanthropic Alfred P. Sloan Foundation receives nominations nationwide and indicates scientists' opinion of the recipient's past work and future potential. The Sloan Research Fellowship includes a largely unrestricted grant award from Sept. 16, 2000 to Sept. 15, 2002 to support Dr. Smith's research.

Dr. Christopher J. Wingard, assistant professor, has received funds from the American Physiological Society Cardiovascular Section's Travel Award for Young Investigators for his abstract titled "Cardiac Neural Crest Ablation Impairs Aortic Smooth Muscle Ca2+ and Force Responses," submitted for the Experimental Biology 2000 Meeting.

Graduate students Kanchan A. Chitaley and Robert D. Loberg, postdoctoral fellows Drs. Anne M. Dorrance and David S. Weber and visiting professor Dr. Romulo Leite received Caroline tum Suden/Frances Hellebrandt Professional Opportunity Awards from the American Physiological Society.

The awards provide a cash award and funds for junior physiologists to attend and present a paper at the annual Experimental Biology meeting. Candidates must be the first author of an abstract submitted to the American Physiological Society and the candidate or the abstract sponsor must be an American Physiological Society member.

Also, graduate student Richard A. Beswick has been awarded the Minority Travel Fellowship Award sponsored by National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases and the National Institute of General Medical Services. The fellowship is for physiologists from under-represented minority groups including African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders. It is open to advanced undergraduate, predoctoral, and postdoctoral students.

Vascular Biology Major Established

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents has established a major in vascular biology under the existing doctor of philosophy degree at the Medical College of Georgia.

The vascular biology major will provide students with the clinical instruction to further biomedical research, to provide a mechanism for attracting qualified graduate students to the Vascular Biology Center and to help MCG achieve its strategic goal of becoming a premier health research institution, according to the Regents Committee on Education, Research and Extension.

The program also will address the need to have trained researchers devoted to preventing and treating vascular diseases. Currently, the only other programs in the country providing instruction at the doctoral level in vascular biology are Vanderbilt University and the University of Virginia.

Researchers Identify Gene Involved in Organ Formation

Toni Baker

One of the target genes for T-box genes, a family of master genes involved in organ development, has been identified by Medical College of Georgia researchers.

The finding is another piece in the complex puzzle of how organs such as the heart and lungs form and how genes interact in that process.

"T-box genes may direct cell populations to their destination or change cell activity," said Jung-Ren Chen, a graduate student in cell biology and anatomy at MCG.

Mr. Chen and his advisor, Dr. Roni J. Bollag, developmental geneticist in the MCG Institute of Molecular Medicine and Genetics, believe the Tbx2 master gene suppresses the activity of target gene Cx43 to help maintain a balance of cell activity that results in formation of key organs, arms and bones.

"There is a hierarchy of gene regulation," Mr. Chen said. "Master genes function by binding to a specific sequence in the regulatory region and they either shut off downstream genes or turn them on, like switches, and there are so many switches. To do that, the master gene transcribes or makes protein that binds to the DNA sequence of a target gene. It's quite amazing, really."

Mr. Chen presented his work at the International Congress on Differentiation and Cell Biology in Australia Sept. 24-28. He received an American Heart Association Travel Award to present the findings at the annual Weinstein-2000 Cardiovascular Development Symposium this June at Washington University in St. Louis.

"Heart development is a very complex process and we are trying to break it down into little bits and pieces," Dr. Bollag said. "It's possible that interfering with this one little piece can affect the whole heart, but that doesn't mean that the T-box gene makes the heart. It's just somehow involved and without it, the heart can't be made normally." Dr. Bollag has cloned six of the known T-box genes.

T-box genes are transcription factors found early in embryonic development, including inside the neural crest cells that migrate from a central tube, called the neural tube, to help form the heart and nearby structures.

Lab tests have demonstrated that hearts of mice without Cx43 lack separate vessels, one to take blood to the lung and another to take blood out to the body, Dr. Bollag said. And, he noted, the Tbx2 gene is expressed in the same area of the developing heart as Cx43.

"In our case, we think that without Tbx2, there would be too much—rather than too little—Cx43," he said. "And the interesting thing about Cx43 is that if you have none, you have heart defects. If you have too much, you have them as well. That's what these transcription factors (Tbx2) do. They control the subtle balance of molecules."

They think this balancing act between Tbx2 and Cx43 goes on all over the developing body, including the heart, arms, legs, lungs and possibly kidneys—wherever tissues interact to produce a third tissue type. For instance, the lungs essentially begin as simple tube, then different tissues interact to form the branches and lobes that comprise the developed lungs. "We think T-box genes are important in making sure that happens," Dr. Bollag said.

When Dr. Bollag came to MCG in the mid-1990s, he began working with Dr. Margaret Kirby, director of MCG's developmental biology group, because of Tbx2's involvement in heart development.

In the early 1980s, Dr. Kirby identified the role of neural crest cells in healthy heart development and, by manipulating neural crest cells, was able to duplicate in the chicken embryo some of the most complex congenital heart defects found in humans. Drs. Bollag and Kirby quickly found common ground because the Tbx2 gene that interested Dr. Bollag was expressed in the neural crest cells she studied.

The relationship between T-box genes and Cx43 seemed natural as well. "There are at least two approaches to looking for a gene that regulates another gene," Mr. Chen said. "If you want to see if gene Y is regulated by gene X, you look into gene X's regulatory sequence to see if there is a binding site for gene Y.

"Cx43, a protein that helps connect neighboring cells, seems to be a good candidate because in its regulatory region there are two binding sites for Tbx2 protein. Also, Cx43 was expressed, among other places, where the heart and limbs started to form. So we thought maybe we should go after these genes. Sure enough, we started to analyze the promoter of Cx43—promoter is another name for regulatory sequence—and using various methods showed that it does bind to this sequence. So there are specific, physical interactions between the promoter and protein," Mr. Chen said. Next they went on to show that Tbx2 repressed Cx43 in cultured cells.

Mr. Chen, a native of Taiwan, will complete his doctorate at MCG in early 2001 and intends to complete postdoctoral work with Dr. Kirby before returning to his homeland. Even then, he hopes collaborative studies will continue. Discussions already have begun through the National Science Council with a Taiwanese researcher who wants to collaborate with Dr. Kirby as well.

"I like to work as part of a team," said Mr. Chen.

Ironically, as Mr. Chen winds up his degree, his advisor, Dr. Bollag has decided to pursue another degree and is now a member of the MCG School of Medicine's freshman class. Like some of his colleagues on campus, Dr. Bollag hopes to expand the scope of his work by combining laboratory studies with clinical experience.

Dr. Bollag's and Mr. Chen's work is funded in part by the National Institutes of Health and the American Heart Association-Georgia Affiliate.

Dr. Wray Named Interim Dean of School of Medicine

Toni Baker

Dr. Betty B. Wray, a graduate of the Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine and a faculty member for more than 30 years, has been named interim dean of the MCG School of Medicine and interim senior vice president for clinical activities at MCG, by MCG President Francis J. Tedesco.

Dr. Wray, chief of the Section of Allergy-Immunology and vice-chairman of the Department of Pediatrics, assumed her new duties July 1.

"Dr. Wray's knowledge of the Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine and her tremendous commitment to it make her an excellent choice to assume the duties of interim dean," Dr. Tedesco said. Those characteristics coupled with her clinical skills also make her an exemplary choice for interim senior vice president for clinical activities, he said.

Dr. Betty B. Wray

Dr. Darrell G. Kirch, dean of the MCG School of Medicine since 1994 and senior vice president for clinical activities since 1998, announced May 2 his acceptance of the positions of senior vice president for health affairs at The Pennsylvania State University, dean of the College of Medicine and chief executive officer of Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. He left MCG June 30.

"I am honored and humbled by this opportunity to serve the MCG School of Medicine," Dr. Wray said. "We and many other academic medical centers in this country truly are in the midst of major change, but we at MCG also have a grand opportunity to shape a stronger future in academics, research and patient care. The MCG School of Medicine is fortunate to have excellent, dedicated faculty committed to moving us forward."

Dr. Wray , a 1960 graduate of the MCG School of Medicine, received the 2000 Distinguished Alumnus Award for Professional Achievement from the Alumni Association of the School of Medicine. She completed her pediatrics residency at MCG in 1965 and a clinical fellowship in 1968 before joining the faculty as an instructor in pediatrics. She was promoted to assistant professor in 1971, associate professor in 1975 and professor in 1981. She has served as allergy-immunology section chief since 1979 and pediatrics vice chairman since 1985.

Dr. Wray is a fellow and past president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. She has done extensive committee work with the college, which represents 4,000 allergists and immunologists, and co-chairs its Board Review Committee.

Dr. Wray is a member of the Food and Drug Administration's Advisory Committee for Allergenic Products. She is a member of the Allergy and Immunology Training Program Directors Committee of the American Academy of Allergy and Immunology and served for six years as the American Medical Association's representative to the Review Committee for Allergy-Immunology of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

Dr. Wray is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Asthma* and a reviewer for the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* and the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.*

Family Still Seeks Answers About MIA/ Alumnus

Christine Hurley Deriso

When Bobby M. Jones entered the Air Force in 1972, he anticipated a quick detour from his ultimate goal of practicing medicine.

He graduated from the

Capt. Bobby M. Jones

Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine in 1971, then completed the first year of an internship at Baylor Hospital in Texas. He was anxious to fulfill a two-year military obligation so he could begin his career in earnest. But that wasn't to be. Bobby never came home from Vietnam.

"The last time we talked to him, he was upbeat—thrilled and happy and thinking everything would be OK," said Bobby's mother, Christine Jones. "We thought so, too."

Twenty-seven years have passed since his parents and sister were told that Bobby was missing in action. They've never stopped looking for him. An obsession?

"No. It's a love story," said Bobby's sister, JoAnne Shirley. "It's a question of what, as a family, we are willing to do for my brother. We chose to be involved."

Details are sketchy, but seemingly indisputable is the fact that the F4-D plane Bobby was riding in crashed shortly before the plane was scheduled to land in DaNang, Vietnam, probably because of the negligence of air traffic controllers. Bobby and the pilot likely died as a result, but the family has no way of knowing for sure.

"I strongly doubt my brother is alive," said JoAnne, "but there are hundreds of Americans that Vietnam can account for, if we would hold their feet to the fire and make them do so. If he died, I can handle that. It's closure that's really important now."

When the crash site was excavated several years ago, no remains or personal belongings were found. Two Vietnamese men turned over remains they claim to have retrieved from the site, but the DNA didn't match that of Bobby or the pilot.

The mystery is particularly maddening, the family says, because of a history of duplicity and non-cooperation regarding Vietnam War soldiers missing in action. As far as they know, Bobby could be a prisoner of war to this day. Or perhaps his remains are being stored by the government; maybe a villager happened upon them and buried them.

JoAnne has traveled the world, including making two trips to Vietnam, to find answers. As national chairman of the National League of Families of POW/MIA, she also has advocated for countless other families, beseeched government officials for assistance and helped revamp policy so that future soldiers can be more readily traced and identified.

Through her work with other families of POW/MIAs, she's witnessed astounding developments.

For instance, one MIA was identified when a Vietnamese man presented a gold wedding band he'd selflessly preserved for years, just in case it might help a family know their loved one's fate, as it eventually did. "I think Bobby's case is in the miracle category," JoAnne said. "At this point, that's what it will take to resolve it. But I've seen miracles happen."

And whether or not she and her now-widowed mother ever learn Bobby's fate, JoAnne considers her mission time well spent. "Whether or not I ever get an answer, I'm in it for the long haul," she said. "I couldn't walk away from the families I've loved for so long."

But don't be misled; despite their commitment, JoAnne and her mother have led full, joyful lives. JoAnne and her husband, Dr. Rudy Shirley, an MCG School of Medicine alumnus, have raised three children. Daughter Chrissie is a sophomore at the University of Georgia, son Rhett is a freshman at MCG and son Bobby, named for his uncle, is a dental student in Louisville, Ky. The family completely supports JoAnne's dedication to her brother's cause. "It has certainly been an instrument in making my family incredibly close," she said. "I've always believed there's something positive in every negative."

And those who loved Bobby cling to his vibrant memory. "He was the sweetest, most compassionate young man in the world," said his mother. "He and his sister were so devoted to each other."

JoAnne, a Christian, firmly believes she'll be reunited with her brother, if not in this life then in the next. When they meet again, she wants to be able to tell him she did everything she could to bring him home. "When I see him again, I don't want to make excuses," she said, "and I don't want to look away."

Editor's note: JoAnne Shirley welcomes correspondence about her brother and/or and interest in participating in the National League of Families of POW/MIA. You can reach her at 104 Rainsong Road, Dalton, Ga., 30720, (706) 278-3746.

Former Resident Wins Humanism Award

Dr. Reid Blackwelder, residency program director at East Tennessee State University Family Physicians of Kingsport and associate professor in the university's Department of Family Medicine, has received a Humanism in Medicine Award from The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey.

The award recognizes physicians who integrate humanism into their practice.

Dr. Blackwelder, who earned his medical degree from Emory University, completed his residency training at the Medical College of Georgia and joined the ETSU faculty in 1992. He specializes in integrating traditional healing systems into Western allopathic training and was featured in a 1997 edition of *Southern Living* magazine.

Dr. Reid Blackwelder

Dr. McEver 'Leaves Legacy of Distinguished Service'

Christine Hurley Deriso

Dr. Virgle W. McEver Jr., a 1953 graduate of the Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine, a member and President Emeritus of the MCG Foundation Board of Directors and a longtime physician in Warner Robins, Ga., died Aug. 23 at age 75.

"He was a wonderful doctor and a wonderful friend," said Dr. James B. Osborne, president of the MCG Foundation. "He leaves a legacy of distinguished service to his friends and community. He will be sorely missed."

Dr. McEver, a native of Moultrie, Ga., served in the Army as a surgical technician during World War II. He later attended North Georgia College and was commissioned as an Army officer. After graduating from MCG, he interned at Brooke Army Hospital in San Antonio, Texas for a year, then moved to Warner Robins.

When he began his practice in Warner Robins in 1954, the town had 12,500 people and only five physicians. That year, Dr. McEver and fellow MCG graduate Dr. Billy Talbert co-founded the Warner Robins Clinic and Hospital. The clinic was the first in Warner Robins to provide surgical and emergency care.

After establishing his practice, Dr. McEver completed a surgical residency at St. Joseph's Infirmary in Atlanta and helped found the Houston Medical Center in 1960. He later served as its chief of surgery and chief of staff. He had been on the hospital's honorary staff since his retirement in 1995. He served as a board member and delegate of the Medical Association of Georgia for more than 25 years.

Dr. McEver was a member of the Warner Robins Chamber of Commerce for more than 40 years and was awarded that group's Charlie L. Jones Award for Distinguished and Unselfish Service in 1998. He had served on the board of directors for the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base since its opening in 1985. In July, a new probationary detention center in Perry, Ga., was named for Dr. McEver.

His survivors include wife Amelia (Amy) and their three sons. His youngest son, Dr. Virgle McEver III, graduated from the MCG School of Medicine in 1979.

Dr. Petersen Dies at Age 48

Dr. Penny E. Petersen, a 1980 graduate of the Medical College of Georgia and Seattle physician, died May 9 of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. She was 48.

Dr. Petersen practiced as an internist, allergist and immunologist at Seattle's Polyclinic from 1984 until she retired due to her illness in 1995. She served on the boards of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival in Seattle, the Seattle International Music Festival and the Seattle Opera. As opera vice president, she helped create and fund the Young Artists Program. She was a pianist, swimmer, sailor and wine-and-food connoisseur.

Survivors include her husband, Dr. Thomas Green, and two daughters.

Dr. Scharnitzky Dies at Age 73

Dr. Emile Scharnitzky Jr., a 1952 graduate of the Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine and longtime physician in the Brewton, Ga., area, died April 5. He was 73.

Dr. Scharnitzky began his Brewton practice in 1954. He was a founding partner of the Brewton Medical Center and New Hope Manor Nursing home. He was chief of staff at D.W. McMillan Memorial Hospital and a former president of the Escambia County Medical Society. Dr. Scharnitzky was a member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, the Brewton City Board of Education, the Brewton Rotary Club and the T.R. Miller Quarterback Club.

Survivors include wife Jeanne, four daughters and eight grandchildren.

Clarification

A photograph in the summer 2000 edition of *AlumNews* pictured the two surviving children of Dr. G. Lombard Kelly: Anne Kelly Sullivan and George Kelly. Dr. Kelly also had another daughter, Margaret Kelly DeVaughn, who is deceased.

Kristen Hiscox with MCG President Francis J. Tedesco

Ms. Hiscox Honored for Academic Performance

Kristen Hiscox was the Medical College of Georgia 2000 student representative for Academic Recognition Day May 4.

Academic Recognition Day was begun in 1986 to celebrate individual academic achievement and recognition within the University System of Georgia.

Ms. Hiscox earned a bachelor's degree, graduating with honors, from the MCG School of Nursing in May. She attended the school's campus in Athens, Ga. Ms. Hiscox has joined the Athens Regional Medical Center staff as an intensive-care nurse.

Nursing Student Pounds Pavement for Leukemia Patient

Deborah G. Steele

For every step she takes and every pedal she makes, Jill Alsop is reminded of one thing: Wallace Johnson Jr.

The 8-year-old Augusta boy has acute lymphocytic lymphoma and is Jill's motivation to run marathons and cycle in 100-mile (century) bike rides, all the while raising awareness and money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

"I know how, when you're a child, you want to go out and play and with Wallace, there are times when he can't do that. I want him to know somebody does care," said Jill, who raised $3,500 in the Honolulu Marathon in December to help pay for some of Wallace's mounting medical bills. She participated in a century ride in June in Wallace's honor.

Although Jill didn't meet Wallace until several months after the Honolulu Marathon, the two came to know each other through phone conversations and photos.

"He likes to play video games, bike and play outside," said Jill, a Medical College of Georgia nursing student. "He has a glowing smile. I really feel like I've come to know him through his pictures. I wear a name band with the name of my patient honoree on it when I run. I look down at it at about mile 18 and that motivates me."

Jill was recently named cycling coach of the Augusta chapter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's newly formed cycling team. "There are highs and lows," said Jill of the marathons and century rides. "There are times when you don't feel like you can take another step and then there are other times when you feel like a million bucks. I just want to be able to help people. I'm not the fastest or most talented, but I have heart, and that's what counts."

Endowment Targeted for Nurse Anesthesia Students

Deborah G. Steele

Jim Masiongale wants to provide a little financial assistance to every student in the Medical College of Georgia Nurse Anesthesia Program. Toward that goal, Mr. Masiongale, a nurse anesthetist at MCG, has helped the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists establish an endowment through the MCG Foundation to help aspiring nurse anesthetists.

"Our long-term goal is that every student to come to the MCG Nurse Anesthesia Program will get some kind of help, but that's still in the process of being worked out," said Mr. Masiongale, who serves on the GANA education committee. "If the pot keeps growing, that's how we envision being able to give each student an award."

Mr. Masiongale estimates that there is $25,000 in the MCG Foundation to fund the awards. The first check will be presented at the December Graduate Nurse Anesthetists Recognition Dinner. "The foundation allows us to give only 4 percent of the total endowment and no more," said Mr. Masiongale. The remaining money gained from interest will be returned to the endowment for future use.

A nurse anesthetist at MCG for a little over four years, Mr. Masiongale knows firsthand—his wife, Amy, is also a nurse anesthetist at MCG—how financially strapped a student in the program can become. "Some schools won't allow nurse anesthesia students to work while they are in the program," he said, noting that students in the MCG Nurse Anesthesia Program are allowed to work as long as they have time.

So, when Mr. Masiongale found out that GANA had money sitting in the bank, he was prompted to find a way to help students in the program. "I started looking at what we could do with the money," he said. "We decided we had three options: establish an American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Foundation award, start our own award program through GANA or establish an award through the MCG Foundation."

The education committee decided to put a third of the money toward an AANA award, while the remainder was used for the MCG Foundation award. "We wanted most of the money to stay home," he said. "We wanted it to stay in the state and we wanted the students to come here."

The AANA Foundation award will be presented to a Georgia resident, but the recipient is not required to attend a Georgia school. To receive the MCG Foundation award, the student must be a Georgia resident and enrolled in the MCG nurse anesthesia program for 12 months.

"We would like to see as many people benefit from this as we can," Mr. Masiongale said of the awards.

Nursing Student Named Association Director

Deborah G. Steele

Mayanne Biaett, a senior at the Medical College of Georgia School of Nursing at Athens, Ga., has been elected director of the National Student Nurses' Association. She will serve a one-year term.

As director of NSNA, Ms. Biaett will chair the Membership Committee and serve on the Bylaws and Image of Nursing Committees.

"This past year, we have had a decline in membership," said Ms. Biaett, adding that admissions to nursing schools also have declined. "Increasing membership is going to be my main focus."

Ms. Biaett, 20, is vice president of the MCG SONAT Student Nurses' Association and is completing a nurse externship at Shepherd Spinal Center, a private hospital in Atlanta that specializes in spinal cord injuries and diseases and brain injuries. She plans to enter graduate school after earning her undergraduate degree.

Mayanne Biaett

Awards Attest to Nursing Instructor's Enthusiasm for Nursing

Deborah G. Steele

Jeannette Andrews epitomizes the spirit of nursing. She cares for her patients day in and day out, on the clock and off, and mentors young nurses to be better at their work.

"I think [nursing students] should try to search for a good mentor and continue to work on their professional development," said Mrs. Andrews, an instructor in the Medical College of Georgia Department of Community Nursing. "They shouldn't view their work as just a job, but a career in nursing that has more responsibility outside of the eight-hour day."

Mrs. Andrews, the mother of 10-year-old twins, received two national honors and one state award recently. She received the Professional Nurse Award from the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs and the 2000 National Nurse Practitioner Award for Community Service presented by NPACE. She also was named Nurse of the Year by the 10th District Georgia Nurses Association.

"I was really honored,"

said Mrs. Andrews. Judy Graham-Garcia, a nurse practitioner in cardiology at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta and a 1998 graduate of the MCG School of Nursing, nominated Ms. Andrews for the Professional Nurse Award. Mrs. Andrews served as a mentor to Ms. Graham-Garcia.

The Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs is a nationwide organization of registered nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the largest employer of nurses nationwide.

Mrs. Andrews, second vice president of the Georgia Nurses Association, is a nurse practitioner in the primary care clinic at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta, providing care to patients with chronic diseases, including diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and chronic pain.

Janie Heath, a former coworker now living in Washington, D.C., nominated Mrs. Andrews for the 2000 National Nurse Practitioner Award for Community Service. NPACE, which also is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, recognizes nurse practitioners throughout the country.

Mrs. Andrews initiated a smoking-cessation clinic at the Augusta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in 1996. As coordinator of the clinic, Mrs. Andrews provides information on the dangers of smoking to patients and children. Weekly smoking cessation clinics also are conducted at the medical center.

A 1987 graduate of the MCG School of Nursing, Mrs. Andrews originated the Spirit of Nursing Showcase where nurses in the CSRA exhibit what they do to the community.

"I'm also very active in advocating for prescriptive authority for nurse practitioners," said Mrs. Andrews, who will begin classes this fall at the University of South Carolina at Columbia to earn a doctor of nursing degree. "I continue to meet with legislators to help them understand our point of view and see both sides."

Mrs. Andrews says it's "important to provide service to the community, service to professional organizations and to the public to improve the health of the public. It's also important to associate yourself with positive people because that helps you stay uplifted and be more enthusiastic and energetic."

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MCG HealthCare™

The Health System of the Medical College of Georgia

Collaborating to Build a New Health System

July 1, 2000: Launch of the New Design

To more effectively fulfill the Medical College of Georgia's teaching, research and patient care mission, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents supported the creation of MCG Health, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, to oversee clinical service delivery at MCG. On July 1, MCG Health, Inc. began operating and managing MCG Hospitals and Clinics primarily to support MCG's tripartite mission, while upholding MCG Hospitals and Clinics' commitment to serve patients of all socioeconomic levels.

"We recognized that MCG Hospitals and Clinics do not stand alone as the sole provider in MCG's clinical delivery system, nor can MCG Hospitals and Clinics, or MCG Health, Inc., support the missions of MCG in isolation," said Don Snell, president and chief executive officer of MCG Health, Inc. "What was required was the design of a new health system in which MCG Health, Inc., the School of Medicine and the Physicians Practice Group work hand-in-hand to deliver the highest-quality patient care, assure that students and house staff have a suitable instructional environment in the health system and ensure that the system is supportive of MCG researchers. This collaboration is MCG Health*Care*. The success of the new health system will benefit everyone."

In addition to providing sites for patient care and education, MCG Health, Inc. will support MCG's teaching and research programs with an agreed-upon percentage of its margin generated from revenues in excess of reasonable expenses.

"MCG Health*Care* will strengthen the position of MCG Hospitals and Clinics as a regional referral center for health care in Georgia and the Southeast and will strengthen the long-term viability of the health sciences education programs, particularly those of the School of Medicine," said Dr. Betty Wray, interim dean of the School of Medicine.

Dr. Curt Steinhart, Physicians Practice Group president and chief executive officer, concurred. "This unique opportunity to reinvent the health system moves us forward toward our vision of a values-driven academic medical center, a place of high-quality science and superb patient service. MCG Health*Care* represents a new, and better, configuration of the relationships between the Physicians Practice Group, MCG Hospitals and Clinics and the School of Medicine."

Design of the New Health System

The MCG HealthCare Annual Report was produced by the MCG Health, Inc. Departments of Public Relations and Marketing.

Strategic Initiatives

MCG Health*Care,* the health system of the Medical College of Georgia, intends to improve patient volumes and revenues, quality service and clinical outcomes through a set of clearly defined strategic initiatives and goals. Accomplishing these goals will also build the economic growth of the Central Savannah River Area and the state of Georgia.

These strategic initiatives and goals are:

Increased Structural Flexibility

MCG Health*Care* will increase the structural and operational flexibility of the health system through creative partnerships that enable the health system to access capital markets and effectively compete in the intensely competitive health care market.

Health System Integration and Development

Linking the components of the health care delivery system into an integrated clinical enterprise will improve the organization's clinical, financial and operational performance.

Aggressive Cost-Repositioning

By reducing costs and implementing unit cost management targets and measurements, we will build reserve funds to re-invest in the future of the organization.

Completion of the Continuum of Care

Delivering quality care in the right setting by the right provider will ensure patient continuity.

Development and Promotion of Clinical Centers of Excellence

Developing and promoting the integrated delivery of clinical services in specialized areas will serve patients, purchasers, referring physicians and non-physician providers.

Evaluation, Selection and Installation of Enterprise-wide Information Systems

A high priority is developing a cost-efficient information system that merges clinical and financial data into timely, user-friendly information for the health system.

Indigent Care Management

Effectively managing indigent care within available resources is necessary for future growth and success.

Strengthened Community Relationships

Proactive community involvement and outreach programs will optimize an inclusive and lasting relationship with the community.

Pursuit of Community Health Initiatives to Broaden Delivery Network

Forming mutually beneficial partnerships and affiliations with rural and community providers and organizations will enhance community health and patient care.

MCG Health, Inc.: The Business of Health Care

The business realities of today's health care environment have necessitated the major changes resulting in the new health system aligned with MCG's three-part mission. Managed care and similar trends in the financing of patient care have threatened the ability of academic medical centers to achieve their teaching, research and patient care missions. Teaching hospitals must respond to the rise in managed-care arrangements and other changes in the health care arena by providing an integrated health care delivery system.

A fully successful integrated health care delivery system requires an operational entity authorized to establish joint ventures and partnerships with other entities; ensure adequate patient volume; enter into multi-year contracts; build reserves; borrow capital to finance improvements; invest in capital improvements and new technology; competitively accept and manage risks; and align and integrate the hospitals, clinics and physicians. This describes MCG Health, Inc.

"The challenges of operating a high-quality health care system in today's marketplace require innovation, initiative and the ability to actively engage in change for continuous improvement," said Mr. Snell.

The collaboration resulting in MCG Health*Care* paves the way for greater profitability, quality leadership and an ever-widening scope of benefit to our patients, communities and state.

MCG Hospitals and Clinics Year in Review

Fiscal 1999-2000 was a year of change and innovative firsts at the Medical College of Georgia Hospitals and Clinics. Most significantly, it was the year of the long-awaited transition to the not-for-profit corporation, MCG Health Inc., created to optimize structural flexibility and profitability in the ever-changing world of health care. The MCG Health Inc. Board of Directors and the University System of Georgia Board of Regents now govern all operations of MCG Hospitals and Clinics under associated agreements.

"We are on our way to a unique leadership position in the Central Savannah River Area. We will be known for the breadth and scope of our clinical programs and services, superior patient care and the excellence of our employees," said Don Snell, president and chief executive officer of MCG Health, Inc. These assets position MCG Health*Care* to respond dynamically to a rapidly changing business and health care environment.

The MCG Health, Inc. Cutover Celebration was a huge success that involved employees, house staff and faculty. More than 2,200 of them signed a promise board pledging, "As a team member of MCG Health, Inc., I am committed to achieving excellence through caring, learning and dedicated service." They also received an excellence lapel pin signifying MCG Health, Inc.'s core values.

MCG's early-retirement program was also a significant part of the transition to MCG Health, Inc. The pro-

MCG Gamma Knife

gram, the first of its kind in the University System of Georgia, was authorized by the Board of Regents to help offset a projected $22.5 million MCG Hospitals and Clinics deficit. The plan went into effect Jan. 1; retirements will be phased in throughout 2000 to minimize the impact on MCG operations.

MCG Hospitals and Clinics employees sent some 7,000 postcards to President Clinton and Georgia's congressional representatives asking for restored federal reimbursements to teaching hospitals; the funds were cut by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. The nationwide postcard campaign was a success: Congress approved an omnibus budget bill to restore $12.8 billion in Medicare cuts.

Also providing significant relief to the budget was a $12.9 million grant from the Georgia Board of Community Health as part of a statewide program to help public hospitals that have not been fully reimbursed for indigent-care expenses. The board approved another $17 million for MCG in December.

MCG Outpatient Pharmacy services were restructured to improve cost-effectiveness. Its revised formulary of prescription medications, designed to improve cost efficiency while continuing to meet patients' needs, is expected to save $2.1 million annually.

MCG Hospitals and Clinics meticulously prepared for Y2K and experienced few problems Jan. 1. This tremendous preparation received national recognition: MCG Hospitals and Clinics were recognized as among the best Y2K-prepared hospitals in the country.

MCG Hospitals and Clinics also received an $89,925 grant from the Nathan Cummings Foundation to implement the Mother-Baby Maternity Care Concept, which keeps mothers and newborns in the same room and cared for by the same nurse.

The MCG Pediatric Transport Team transported its 1,000th patient to the MCG Children's Medical Center Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. The MCG team is one of only three in the Southeast that sends a doctor along for the transport. During Hurricane Floyd, the transport team provided service to many coastal hospitals.

In January 1999, the MCG Children's Medical Center became one of five hospitals in the nation to begin clinical trials of a new device to close holes in babies' hearts without surgery. In addition, the use of a new procedure using high-frequency electrical stimulation of a deep motor control area in the brain began giving Parkinson's disease patients more movement control.

The Children's Medical Center completed its first full year of operation during the fiscal year, exceeding expectations in patient admissions and surgical procedures.

MCG's Southeast Gamma Knife Center opened in May. This state-of-the-art technology makes it possible to treat some brain tumors and other aberrations without ever opening the skull. MCG is one of 38 health care centers in the country and the only one in the eastern United States affiliated with a children's hospital to house a gamma knife.

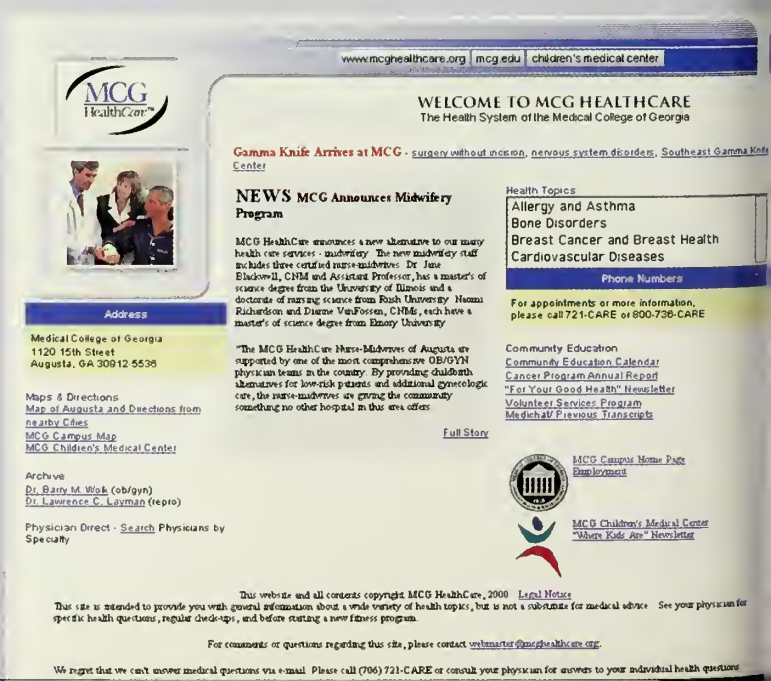
Other clinical highlights include a new stem and bone marrow transplant program at the MCG Children's Medical Center.

In June, Women's Services at the Medical College of Georgia Hospitals and Clinics expanded to include obstetric and gynecological care by certified nurse-midwives. Three rooms on the obstetric unit of the hospital are being remodeled for the exclusive use of certified nurse-midwives to allow patients to experience labor, delivery and postpartum care in one room.

MCG Hospitals and Clinics continue to be active in community initiatives. More than 100 MCG faculty and staff walked in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. Others walked, ran or rode bicycles in events to raise awareness and dollars to fight heart disease, diabetes and other diseases.

MCG Hospitals and Clinics also supported the Junior League of Augusta's Festival of Trees, benefiting education and philanthropic activities throughout the community. The health system also participated in the CSRA Classic, the Wackenhut Health

Homepage: www.mcghealthcare.com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NEWS MCG Announces Midwifery Program
MCG HealthCare announces a new alternative to our many health care services - midwifery. The new midwifery staff includes three certified nurse-midwives: Dr. Jane Blackwell, CNM and Assistant Professor, has a master's of science degree from the University of Illinois and a doctorate of nursing science from Rush University. Naomi Richardson and Dianne VanFossen, CNMs, each have a master's of science degree from Emory University.
"The MCG HealthCare Nurse-Midwives of Augusta are supported by one of the most comprehensive OB/GYN physician teams in the country. By providing childbirth alternatives for low-risk patients and additional gynecologic care, the nurse-midwives are giving the community something no other hospital in this area offers."
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We regret that we can't answer medical questions via e-mail. Please call (706) 721-CARE or consult your physician for answers to your individual health questions.

Fair and the City of Character program. The Annual American Red Cross and MCG Community Health Fair continued its success by providing health screenings and health information at Augusta Mall in March. In addition, numerous community education programs such as The Kids on the Block Puppets were presented at the CMC and in the community to teach children numerous health-related topics. The MCG Children's Medical Center was also involved in many activities such as the Wee Can Ski Program and the Blue Ribbon Riders to help special-needs children enjoy an afternoon of fun and camaraderie.

MCG Hospitals and Clinics implemented a consumer Web site with over 1,000 pages of health-related topics. Through the Web site, www.mcghealthcare.org, MCG hosted the area's first cyber-active medicine chat room, MCG Health*Care* MediChat, which linked thousands of consumers online directly to MCG physicians for real-time answers to medical questions. Chat rooms were designed specifically for topics such as child psychology, breast cancer/health, sports medicine, gastroenterology, joint replacement and many more. MediChat is an ongoing program showcasing MCG Health*Care* health professionals.

The many exciting changes that have occurred over the past year place MCG Hospitals and Clinics in a strong position for the next year to bring even greater success, recognition and prosperity.

In Memoriam: Thomas F. Allgood, Sr.

First Chairman of the MCG Health, Inc. Board of Directors

Thomas F. Allgood Sr., a University System of Georgia regent and first chairman of MCG Health, Inc.'s board of directors, died Aug. 4. He was a member of the American Judicature Society, the American Bar Association, the South Carolina Bar Association, the State Bar of Georgia and the Augusta Bar Association, and was a member and former president of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association.

Mr. Allgood was elected to the Georgia Senate in 1976 to represent the 22nd district, which included Augusta and part of Richmond County. After only two terms, his colleagues elected Mr. Allgood Senate Majority Leader. He served as majority leader from 1981 until he left the Senate in 1991.

In 1992, Gov. Zell Miller appointed Mr. Allgood to the University System of the Georgia Board of Regents. The next year he was appointed to serve a seven-year term on the board, representing Georgia's 10th District. He served as chairman of the Board of Regents from 1996 to 1997.

As a regent, Mr. Allgood implemented several important projects in the Augusta-Richmond County area, including improving and expanding Augusta State University. Mr. Allgood also helped obtain funds for several major projects, including the $500,000 National Science Center, the $50 million extension of Murray Road, $2.1 million for the Allied Health Sciences Building at Augusta Technical College and the $150,000 expansion of Paine College library. He is also credited with obtaining the $37 million for MCG's Ambulatory Care Center/Specialized Care Center.

He invested five years, countless meetings and months of negotiations to win approval for the decision, according to Don Snell, president and chief executive officer of MCG Health, Inc.

After its establishment, Mr. Allgood was appointed chairman of the MCG Health, Inc. Board of Directors. "Mr. Allgood's leadership will surely be missed, but his work will stand the test of time," said Pat Sodomka, executive vice president and chief operating officer for MCG Health, Inc." He left in place a strong foundation for the governance of our new health system."

Dr. G. Lionel Zumbro, MCG chief of caridiothoracic surgery, was a close friend of Mr. Allgood and his wife, T., who died with her husband in the Aug. 4 plane crash. "In addition to his passion for public service, Tom was a dedicated family man and a loyal friend. He was like a father to me," said Dr. Zumbro. "Tom was a great sportsman. I remember the many weekend trips we would have to cut short so that he could return in time to attend an important meeting on behalf of MCG. MCG and his work as a Regent were always on his mind."

Doug Barnard Jr., a former congressman and a member of the MCG Health, Inc. Board of Directors, also knew Mr. Allgood for many years. "Sen. Tom Allgood was a man of superior distinction, not only in his hometown, but also throughout the state of Georgia," Mr. Barnard said. "His leadership qualities were widely recognized both in the Georgia Senate and on the state Board of Regents. In every endeavor he undertook, he was successful—as a lawyer, businessman, elected official and public servant. I think, however, that his most notable achievement was the friendships he made along the way."

"Tom will be long remembered for his leadership in everything he attempted, but most of all in bringing into being MCG Health, Inc., where he served as its founder and first Chairman, and without his leadership it most likely would not have succeeded."

Summary Statement of Current Funds Revenues, Expenditures and Other Changes
Year Ended June 30, 2000

	Unrestricted			
	Educational and General	Auxiliary Enterprises	Restricted	TOTAL CURRENT FUNDS
Revenue				
Educational and General Revenues				
Student Tuition and Fees	$ 10,870,081.95	$ 0.00	$ 0.00	$ 10,870,081.95
Federal Appropriations				0.00
State Appropriations	138,739,664.00			138,739,664.00
Equipment/Technology/Construction Trust Fund	1,396,126.00			1,396,126.00
Local Appropriations				0.00
Federal Grants and Contracts	3,377,138.87		15,982,474.92	19,359,613.79
State Grants and Contracts	167,801.46		98,975,473.58	99,143,275.04
Local Grants and Contracts	0.00		808,722.26	808,722.26
Private Gifts, Grants and Contracts	560,504.67		44,086,343.31	44,646,847.98
Investment Income				
Endowment			114,595.30	114,595.30
Other				0.00
Sales and Services				
Educational Activities	4,800,420.89			4,800,420.89
Hosptial and Clinics	228,389,095.46			228,389,095.46
Other Sources	3,594,493.85			3,594,493.85
Total Educational and General Revenues	391,895,327.15	0.00	159,967,609.37	551,862,936.52
Sales and Services of Auxiliary Enterprises		5,143,071.19		5,143,071.19
TOTAL REVENUES	**391,895,327.15**	**5,143,071.19**	**159,967,609.37**	**557,006,007.71**
Expenditures and Mandatory Transfers				
Educational and General Expenditures				
Instruction	77,165,663.52		44,819,760.78	121,985,424.30
Research			17,740,592.30	17,740,592.30
Public Service	2,739,147.07			2,739,147.07
Academic Support	11,830,518.08		655,139.52	12,485,657.60
Student Services	1,799,367.97			1,799,367.97
Institutional Support	22,680,295.63		1,835,423.16	24,515,718.79
Operation and Maintenance of Plant	8,715,583.46			8,715,583.46
Scholarships and Fellowships	1,346,629.67		1,107,748.00	2,454,377.67
Hospital and Clinics	266,657,345.21		93,808,945.61	360,466,290.82
Total Educational and General Expenditures	392,934,550.61	0.00	159,967,609.37	552,902,159.98
Auxiliary Enterprises Expenditures		5,552,073.46		5,552,073.46
Mandatory Transfers				0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AND MANDATORY TRANSFERS	**392,934,550.61**	**5,552,073.46**	**159,967,609.37**	**558,454,233.44**
Other Transfers and Additions/Deductions				
Excess Restricted Receipts Over Transfers to Revenues			5,943,790.96	5,943,790.96
Non-Mandatory Transfers	0.00	(344,412.00)		(344,412.00)
Adjustments—Prior Year	789,711.67	666.92		790,378.59
Lapse of Surplus—Prior Year				
To State Treasury—General Funds	(532,864.82)			(532,864.82)
To State Treasury—Lottery Funds/Regular	(194.10)			(194.10)
TOTAL OTHER TRANSFERS AND ADDITIONS/DEDUCTIONS	**256,652.75**	**(343,745.08)**	**5,943,790.96**	**5,856,698.63**
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN FUND BALANCES	**($782,570.71)**	**($752,747.35)**	**$5,943,790.96**	**$4,408,472.90**

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President's Level

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*Deceased

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The following members of the President's Club at the Founder's Level have made lifetime contributions of $10,000 to $49,999.

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Mrs. Mary W. Burnett
Dr. and Mrs. Charles G. Burton

The Medical College of Georgia hosts a dinner every fall to honor members of the President's Club. Scenes from the 1999 dinner are featured on the following pages.

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Dr. Paige Judith Collins and
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Dr. and Mrs. William C. Collins
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Dr. and Mrs. Isaac Goodrich
Dr. Samuel M. Goodrich and
Mrs. Ellen Schneider Goodrich
Mrs. Dorothy Royal Gower
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Dr. Margaret F. Guill
Mrs. Margie Hudgins Hammock
Dr. and Mrs. Billy S. Hardman
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Dr. and Mrs. Sterling A. Harris Jr.
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Dr. Melvin L. Haysman and
Mrs. Roberta Kamine-Haysman
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Mrs. Neal F. Yeomans
Dr. and Mrs. George G. Young
Dr. and Mrs. Timothy R. Young

*Deceased

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The following businesses and foundations have contributed $1,000 or more during fiscal 1999-2000.

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Ace Hardware
Acura of Augusta
Acuson Corporation
Agouron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
Alcon Laboratories Inc.
Allergan Inc.
Alltel Mobile Communications, Inc.
Alza
American College Of Allergy, Asthma, And Immunology
American Dairy Queen Corp.
American Health Consultants
Amgen, Inc.
AstraZeneca
AstraZeneca Lecture Bureau
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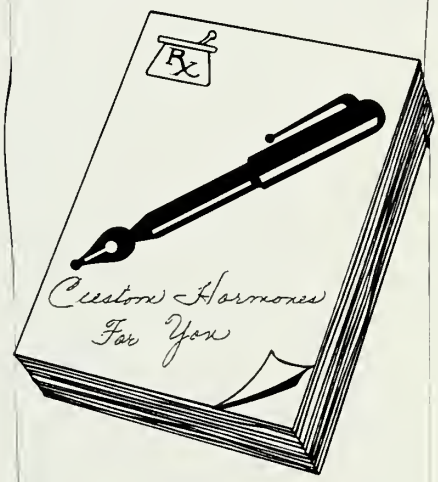

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